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CORRESPONDENCE

Population pressure

Agawam, Mass.

To the Editors: The times are definitely changing when both *Commonweal* and Mother Teresa acknowledge the legitimacy of managing population growth. In its editorial on "The Big Thirst" [March 25], *Commonweal* tells us that "those who ignore population pressures are ignoring reality." At a national prayer breakfast in Washington last February, Mother Teresa remarked, "I know that couples have to plan their family, and for that there is natural family planning."

In much of the world today machismo keeps many women perpetually pregnant as a means of insuring fidelity. Some nations promote having large families as a means to supply the work force and the military. In the past some states have launched wars to secure resources for burgeoning populations; today we see clan warfare erupting as groups look toward a future of limited food and water. Clearly, indulgent procreation can be as much an enemy of human dignity and social justice as abortion and artificial contraception.

In spite of all this, some quarters of the lay Catholic press assure us that we should not be concerned about human population growth, that "God always sends a loaf of bread with every baby," or, in one of the more extreme assertions, that the entire population of the planet could live comfortably within the borders of Texas!

Many Catholics today practice sexual restraint not so they can buy a more expensive car but out of concern for how their procreative practices can impact the lives of other people's children. So far, however, this viewpoint has been largely missing from Catholic dialogue. *Commonweal* is to be applauded for raising the issue in a way that invites further discussion.

RICHARD I. LaPALME

Aw, shucks

Valparaiso, Ind.

To the Editors: What a marvelous issue [April 22]—every article is better than the last! Dreese, Hopkins, Callahan especially were examples of what *Commonweal* does so well.

Thanks for being good.

GAIL M. EIFRIG

The writer is editor of The Cresset, *published by Valparaiso University.*

Hopkins si, Callahan no

Park Ridge, Ill.

To the Editors: The excellent piece by Robert Hopkins ["Sean's Gift," April 22] evoked reader compassion for his son's tragic life and succeeded in gaining sympathy and understanding for all those afflicted by AIDS. Unfortunately, Sidney Callahan's quirky defense of perversion in the same issue reversed this mood.

EDWARD F. HALPIN

A shared pain

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Father John J. Dreese's article, "The Other Victims of Priest Pedophilia" [April 22], moved me greatly. As a cradle Catholic who once studied for the priesthood, I share Father Dreese's dismay, disgust, and anger with respect to the enormous damage that priest-pedophiles have done. But I write to assure your author and the many thousands of wonderful and devoted men of faith who preceded him and will, God willing, follow him in the priesthood that there are Catholics out here who love and respect you and share your suffering. As painful as the whole issue is, for me the greater pain is to see in the faces of priests I have known and loved the agony that Father Dreese so movingly describes in his own life. If it would lessen his sadness I would gladly embrace him. All I can do is pray, and react indignantly when I hear disparaging words about priests.

Don't lose heart, Father Dreese. We love

(Continued on page 43)

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Illustrations: Cover art, pp. 26, 40, Charlot; cover design, Antonucci; pp. 5, 10, Ray, Rothco; pp. 12, 22, 32, 36, Baloo, Rothco; p. 13, Matt, Rothco; p. 20, © Ulf Andersen; p. 28, Valerry.

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COMMONWEAL

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

A shining moment

The revolution that ended forty-five years of apartheid in South Africa last month—complete with universal suffrage, new flag and national anthem ("*Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika*," "God Bless Africa")—was not a velvet revolution à la Eastern Europe. But like the collapse of communism in 1989, it was an achievement of the highest order and a triumph of the human spirit. The courage and dignity of those voting for the first time offered a lesson for a world beleaguered by ethnic wars, religious controversies, and single-party rule. True, the legacy of apartheid, built on three hundred years of colonialist subjugation in South Africa, will not be expunged soon, if ever. But South Africa gives hope that even in the most intractable of circumstances, new beginnings can be made when there is the will and the wisdom.

South Africa arrived at this moment because of the remarkable leadership of Nelson Mandela, "a leader of enormous stature, a man of firm principle and generous spirit, and a better politician than any had hoped for" (*Economist*, April 23). It did so because of the political change of heart fostered in white South Africans by the ruling National party leader, F.W. de Klerk, and by those white liberals who fought for the repeal of apartheid from the day of its imposition. But the changes in South Africa happened in no small measure because of moral pressures exerted from abroad. At a time when Randall Robinson of TransAfrica Forum has been fasting to bring the attention of Americans to the fate of Haitians, it should be remembered that the sanctions and boycotts advocated by Robinson and others against South Africa helped create the critical opening that Mandela and de Klerk navigated so effectively. It was international sanctions that gradually helped to convince the dead souls in Pretoria's government that majority rule in South Africa was the country's only hope for a future.

The revolutionary changes now legally under way in South Africa were born of the blood of martyrs. Plentiful though such blood was, it alone does not account for the historic change we are witnessing. That change was achieved through painstaking organizing at the grass roots and around the world. The real miracle of last month's plebiscite was not that it was peaceful, but that it took place at all.

April's election happened because of a series of timely accommodations by all the parties concerned, brokered at critical points over the past four years since Mandela's release from prison in 1990. Credit goes to de Klerk for releasing Mandela, and for correctly gauging that the fall of the Berlin Wall opened new possibilities for change in South Africa. With the end of the cold war, de Klerk reasoned, the world would be looking ever more closely at South Africa and bringing pressure to bear on it. But the African National Congress (ANC) and its Communist allies would have to adjust as well to a post-Communist world where the failure of command economies had become apparent to all. De Klerk was not disappointed: Mandela and the ANC

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quickly made room for free markets where before only nationalization would do.

Wishing to avoid a repeat of the white flight and the incitement of tribal rivalries that have destroyed much of postcolonial Africa, the ANC made other critical political concessions to guarantee that the new South Africa would not be a land only for the black majority. "To be dismissive of opposition," Mandela told a TV audience recently, "that is what was done in Angola and Mozambique. We must not make that mistake." Thus while the ANC insisted on one-person-one vote, it agreed to a five-year government of national unity that will be representative of all voting constituencies in South Africa. Rather than a winner-take-all setup, the ANC concurred that any party with 5 percent of the vote would be granted a cabinet position, as well as guaranteed seats in the new parliament. And on the local level, the ANC signed onto an agreement that residents of existing white, Indian, and colored areas would elect a minimum of at least 30 percent of local representatives.

To induce the Zulu-led Inkata Freedom Party (IFP) of Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi to participate, in February the ANC agreed to a double ballot in the elections: one for national office, the other for nine regional elections. While Chief Buthelezi held off on participating in the electoral process until a week before the plebiscite, it was the ANC's concession that weakened IFP resistance to participation. Finally, when the election itself proved poorly administered and too slow in many Inkata areas, the voting was extended a day.

This is in no way to forget that 13,000 people died in partisan political violence in South Africa since the ANC was legalized in 1990. Nor is it to say that future cooperation will be the rule in South Africa. The new government faces immediate problems of immense size and complexity: The unemployment rate of the African population is nearly 50 percent; 53 percent live below the poverty level, compared to 2 percent of whites; whites have a personal per capita income 9.5 times that of Africans; over generations, tribal violence was fanned by deliberate government policies; and white racism remains deeply entrenched.

But if gestures carry significance, perhaps one will stand out in the years ahead, a gesture candidate Mandela made to de Klerk during a debate in April. After strongly criticizing de Klerk throughout the debate, Mandela reached over to his opponent, took him by both hands, and said: "My criticism of Mr. de Klerk should not obscure one fact. We are a shining example of people drawn from different race groups who have a common loyalty, a common love for their common country."

The shining example of a South Africa that has made peace with itself while maintaining its diversity would be a timely gift for all of Africa. Mandela has pointed out that all of southern Africa was the victim of South African apartheid. South Africa's military adventures left 2 million dead and an estimated $62 billion of damage for its neighbors. Its exports of arms fueled tragedies abroad, including those of today: In 1992 South Africa sold an estimated $6 million in light arms to Rwanda.

The birth of a genuine, multiracial democracy in South Africa—one that fosters the well-being of all its peoples, particularly apartheid's most aggrieved victims—is the most important development in Africa in the last quarter of a century. It is a process we should foster with our money, our creative energies, and our prayers.

HUMAN RIGHTS & TRADE

HOW NOT TO PUNISH CHINA

THE FAXES OF FREEDOM

If foreign policies had a death wish, the U.S. policy on China enunciated last May could be said to have fulfilled it. It seemed designed to founder.

China gained Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status under President Jimmy Carter. This MFN status, which has been subsequently renewed through the Reagan and Bush administrations, was threatened when President Bill Clinton turned a campaign promise into an executive order that linked its further extension to "overall, significant progress" on human rights in China. No such improvement, no MFN. The State Department's evaluation of such progress, or the lack of it, is scheduled to land on the president's desk on June 3, a date that also marks the fifth anniversary of the massacre of Tiananmen Square. The closer that date approaches, the more uneasiness the administration shows about the corner into which it has boxed itself. For if the policy has the advantage of being clear-cut and unqualified, it also has the concomitant disadvantages.

The Clinton administration is being forced to look more closely at some home truths. China now has the third largest and the fastest-growing economy in the world. Last year it exported $33 billion worth of goods to the United States from which it imported about $9 billion worth, for a very favorable surplus.This trade involves a significant number of workers on both sides of the trade balance, and further billions in future contracts. A serious rupture in this trade—the withdrawal of MFN status and the imposition of broad sanctions—would cause severe losses for both Chinese and American interests, although China could look to other trading partners.

The policy declared in the executive order was intended to use these interests as a lever to force China to improve its human rights practices, its handling of political prisoners, its relations with Tibet, and its disruption of foreign news broadcasts. When Warren Christopher made his much publicized trip to China in March, he stated these concerns directly to his hosts. Even more bluntly, his hosts told the secretary of state they did not welcome his intrusions into their internal affairs and that the importance of trade between the two countries had been overstated. (Foreign Minister Qian Qiche later said that during the twenty-three years in which there was no trade between China and the United States, "I think you lived quite well. And so did we.")

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To add to this sharp rebuff, the Chinese authorities harassed dissidents on the occasion of Christopher's visit. Part bluff, part traditional sensitivity to foreign influences, but not beyond anticipation.

China's clear lack of interest in displaying improvement in its human rights practices is confirmed by organizations such as Asia Watch and Puebla Institute, which have documented specific human rights abuses and particular people who have suffered them. The latter organization has reported that, in fact, "repression of Christians by the Chinese government increased significantly since mid-1993." (In the interest of full disclosure: I am chairman of Puebla.) Given this record there can be no fair finding that China has made overall significant progress in human rights during the last year.

On the basis of these facts, many commentators as well as policymakers have described the situation as a head-on conflict between expediency and principles, between commmercial and moral interests. In fact, the Clinton policy seems to set up that very confrontation—which is why the policymakers are unhappy and why the policy is inadequate to the reality.

Some of the factors that have been left out of the equation include the real interests of other Asian countries, including U.S. allies; the role of China in cooperative political ventures with the U.S.; the effect of further market economy inroads in China; and the effect of a prospering, peaceful China in Asia.

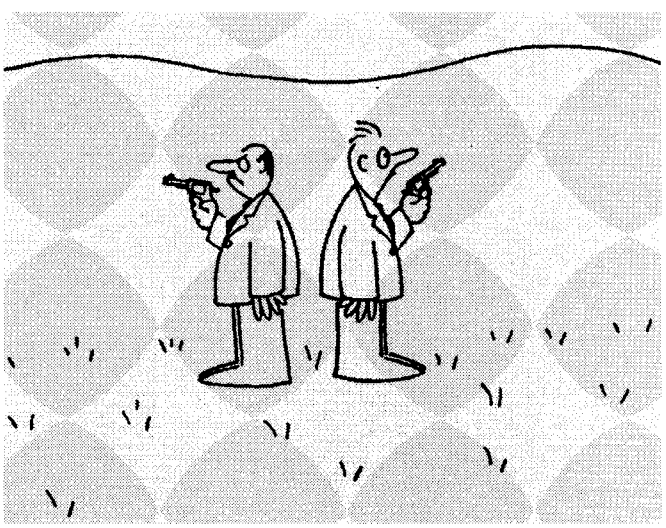
No Asian country supports the U.S. policy linking MFN and human rights improvement in China. This is partly because they do not give human rights as much weight in formulating foreign policy as does the U.S., but also because they fear the possible consequences of a U.S.-China confrontation. This fear is measured not only in economic terms—trade, money, and jobs, all of which depend on a prospering China—but in terms of the Asian balance of power, stability, and chances of long-range peace. The United States has an important role to play if these goals are to be achieved, a role that would be grievously impaired by a Sino-American conflict. North Korea may prove intransigent in its refusal to allow proper oversight of its nuclear facilities, but there is a better chance of changing its present stance if China and the U.S. cooperate in the effort.

Perhaps the most important factor, however, is the deleterious effect extensive sanctions would have on the Chinese people themselves—the people, not the government. One of Karl Marx's most penetrating insights is pertinent here: "The bourgeosie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most backward, nations into civilization...it batters down all Chinese walls...it forces the underdeveloped nations' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate."

One of the most effective ways to improve the condition of human rights in China is to increase, not diminish, trade with China. Improvement within China during the last ten or twelve years supports this judgment. Not only does such trade help produce a middle class, with increasingly sophisticated political and social views, but it introduces new information and values into an insular society. Tiananmen Square remains a great blot on China's record, but it is well to note that the world would have known little of that event if advanced communication technology had not transmitted it almost instantly to every corner of the globe. China's subsequent denials fell on informed ears that knew better. Increased trade means an increase in high-tech communications both in China and between China and other countries. It is a potent lever to open that society to outside values.

Anyone still skeptical about the transforming effect of modern communications should consider the last years and days of the Soviet Union. In early 1991, before the failed coup attempt of August, independent Soviet coal miners initiated a series of strikes across the country. They spoke in the name of democracy and reform in a voice that could not be entirely ignored. They were able to do this because the AFL-CIO in this country had but recently helped them procure computers, faxes, modems, etc. This technology allowed groups of miners who were united in spirit but separated by vast distance to do what was previously impossible, to communicate rapidly and coordinate their activities. As one of the most powerful forces fighting for democracy, they helped defeat the coup planned by the State Committee for the State of Emergency and paved the way for the election of Boris Yeltsin as president. Without the efforts of the workers' movement—made possible only by rapid internal communication—it is doubtful that this transforming event in Soviet/Russian history would have developed as it did.

For these reasons, the linkage between MFN and a marked improvement in human rights should be broken. The United States should not force itself to choose between drastically reducing trade with China, on the one hand, and on the other, justifying continued MFN status by devising the most transparent fig-leaf of supposed improvement in its human rights record. This most emphatically does not mean dislodging considerations of human rights from U.S. interests and policies. That plank should be firmly in place. Violations of human rights should be disclosed and condemned in various forums. Pressure for reform should come from both governmental and nongovernmental agencies. The work of organizations such



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as Asia Watch and Puebla deserves strong support and encouragement. But their efforts should not be made to contest with other desirable, even necessary, policies. JAMES FINN

James Finn is senior editor of Freedom Review, *the bimonthly magazine published by Freedom House.*

CHURCH & STATE & SCHOOLS

THE USCC & THE REBBE

TWISTING THE FIRST AMENDMENT

David Tracy, in *Plurality and Ambiguity* (Harper & Row, 1985), eloquently articulates his hope for the healing possibilities of religion in the contemporary world. He warns, however, that "any religion, whether past or present, in a position of power surely demonstrates that religious movements, like secular ones, are open to corruption....Whoever comes to speak in favor of religion and its possibilities of enlightenment and emancipation does not come with clean hands nor with a clean conscience." The United States Catholic Conference (USCC) and other religious bodies would do well to attend to this warning when they urge greater government support and greater political power for religion.

This past February the USCC filed an amicus brief that argues for both the desirability and the constitutionality of "legislative accommodations of religion." The brief and eight others advocating greater government accommodation have been filed in support of the petitioners in *Board of Education* v. *Grumet*, currently before the Court. (The Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups filing amicus briefs for the petitioners include the Rutherford Institute, the Christian Legal Society, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Center for Law and Ethics, the Family Research Council, the Institute for Religion and Polity, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Christian Life Commission, the Knights of Columbus, the Archdiocese of New York, the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, the American Center for Law and Justice, and the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.)

Board of Education v. *Grumet* concerns the constitutionality of a New York State law that created a new public school district coterminous with the village of Kiryas Joel, a separately incorporated Hasidic village in Orange County, New York. The school district was created to settle a longstanding local dispute over the provision of special education to children of Kiryas Joel, children whose parents would not permit them to attend the local public school because they believed that the appearance and customs of their children would be ridiculed by non-Hasidic children.

Hasidic Jewish communities in the United States are successors to those created in Eastern Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These communities were centers of a new and distinctive Jewish piety and social structure that stressed joy in the observance of the commandments and the need for *devekut*, a cleaving to God by each individual. This new piety liberated many ordinary Jews from the highly structured culture of the rabbinic Judaism of the time, but later became more structured itself as Hasidic communities developed into royalist courts that consciously resisted acculturation, assimilation, and adaptation to reforming and rationalizing tendencies within Judaism.

Hasidic communities are governed by a rebbe, a charismatic religious leader, who is regarded as having special access to God and who has far-reaching authority over the daily lives of the members of his court. In Kiryas Joel, which is a part of the Satmar Hasidim, the largest and most conservative Hasidic community in the United States, the rebbe decides, among other matters, who may marry whom, who may buy property, and who may run for public office. Dissidents are punished by being ostracized from the life of the community. The rebbe also determines which aspects of the members' lives are religious and therefore governed by Jewish law (as interpreted by the rebbe), and which are secular and therefore open to negotiation with secular law and culture.

By creating a public school district for Kiryas Joel, New York State has endorsed the decision of the rebbe of the Satmar Hasidim that Hasidic children in need of special education may be educated only in this specially created "public school" rather than in the village's religious schools, which the rest of the children in Kiryas Joel attend, or in the special education programs provided by Orange County's public schools. The state has also ceded the operation of the school district, a state entity, to a religious group. In effect, the New York law does not simply allow a religious community to practice its "strongly held religious beliefs," as the amicus briefs would have it. It endorses the religious and political world view of a particular religious community, a world view that in Eastern Europe at once segregated Jews from the rest of society and permitted the creation of tiny theocracies.

The main concern of the United States Catholic Conference, as is evident from its brief, is to secure equal access to public funding for Catholic schools. An argument can be made for such funding—including evidence of the genuine public service provided by Catholic schools, especially in urban areas. But the USCC and other religious groups undermine their own case by supporting the continuation of the Kiryas Joel special school district. In choosing this case as a vehicle for the expression of its interests in public funding of Catholic schools, the USCC is making a broader and less defensible claim about the meaning of the First Amendment than its interests warrant.

The USCC argues in its brief that the parents in *Board of Education* v. *Grumet*, as a direct result of previous decisions by the Court (*Aguilar* and *Grand Rapids*) "have been forced into a 'cruel choice' between their religious faith and their children's education." It further argues that the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause "encourages" legislatures to avoid such cruel choices by accommodating religion because the clauses are intended "'not as a protection *from* religion, but rather as a

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protection *for* religion.'"

In contrast to the Kiryas Joel brief, which argues that the new school district is entirely secular and was created for secular reasons, the USCC brief is part of a larger argument pressing for a greater role for religion in American public life. There is a case to be made that religion is sometimes misrepresented and often misunderstood in the media and by other public institutions. I believe that the USCC and other religious groups, in their zeal to correct those misapprehensions, are unwise to choose this occasion to promote religion-in-general, rather than urging a greater appreciation for and understanding of the universality and vitality of religion, as well as the contributions that religious individuals and institutions make to the public good.

In its brief, the USCC repeatedly quotes pious dicta from previous cases suggesting that the First Amendment is intended to promote religion—not religious freedom, but religion-in-general—as an unqualified public good. On the contrary, the First Amendment protects the free exercise of religion while prohibiting the establishment of religion, thereby recognizing both the tendency of individuals and groups to practice and promote their religious beliefs, and the evident evils that have been produced by state efforts to insure religious conformity. But that is not the same thing as promoting—or even accommodating—religion. The First Amendment is a protection *from* religion as well as *for* religion.

The USCC's unqualified promotion of religion fails to acknowledge the deeply compromised history of all religious groups, increases the resistance of those opposed to an enlarged role for religion, and contributes to the already polarized and hostile tenor of this debate. The promotion of religion-in-general fails to acknowledge that it is not all religion, but only a certain kind of religion, that is being promoted. Thus, in its brief the USCC refers to the First Amendment's role in the protection of "legitimate" beliefs, and argues that "it is a demonstrated part of our history and tradition that government will adjust itself, if possible, to allow citizens to enjoy untrammeled religious expression." This seems an astonishing statement by a Catholic body. In the course of our own country's history, Catholic beliefs, and other unpopular religious beliefs, have often been regarded as illegitimate, and Catholics, and other unpopular citizens, have often been denied "untrammeled religious expression." Perhaps this historical amnesia is proof indeed that the immigrant Catholic church has come of age politically. It no longer sees its theology as a dissenting theology; it seems confident that it can control what religion is legitimate and should be given untrammeled expression.

On the whole, the theories of religion underlying current competing interpretations of the First Amendment have not been adequately examined. The USCC and its Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical Protestant allies, in their apparent determination to rescue religion and Americans from secular humanism, have here supported what is in fact both a violation of the First Amendment and probably a subversion of their own theologies.

Government aid to private schools, religious or otherwise, is an entirely different enterprise from the creation of public schools that are designed to serve and are entirely controlled by one religious community and its understanding of the First Amendment. Public schools must serve the whole community and exist, among other reasons, and at their best, as common schools, modeling the American community as a whole and teaching students to respect religious and cultural differences.

The Kiryas Joel case is not the same as legislative accommodation or exemption from general laws designed to allow the free exercise of religion. The New York law advances the legitimation of a religious ghetto, a religious ghetto created by the laws both of New York State and of the Satmar Hasidic community—a religious community within which religious freedom is denied. The creation of the special school district says to the children of Kiryas Joel and to those of the larger community that New York agrees with their rebbe.

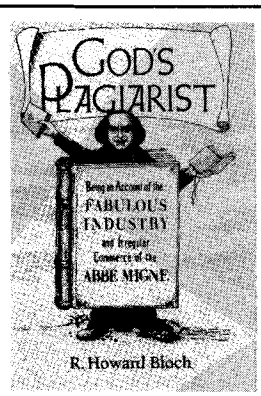
By supporting this version of an Hasidic world view, the decision of the USCC to file its amicus brief fails to honor the rich and varied spiritual tradition of Hasidic Jews. It also squanders the USCC's own pastoral and moral authority by undermining its efforts to secure equal access to public funding for private religious schools. WINNIFRED FALLERS SULLIVAN

Winnifred Fallers Sullivan has J.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago and is a post-doctoral scholar at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

GOD'S PLAGIARIST

Being an Account of the Fabulous Industry and Irregular Commerce of the Abbé Migne

R. HOWARD BLOCH



Part detective novel, part morality tale, Bloch's vivid account of the abbé Migne's remarkable career guides us through the labyrinth of this priest-entrepreneur's outrageous exploits. Migne put the most questionable of business practices in the service of his devotion to Catholicism and built one of the most successful and controversial publishing empires of all time.

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SUBSIDIES FOR ABORTION?

CONGRESSMAN VS. CONSTITUENT

Dear Mr. Hoyt:

Thank you for informing me of your opposition to the inclusion of abortion in the president's health-care reform proposal. I appreciate your taking the time to share your views.

Although I understand your opinions, I do not agree with you on this question. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Constitution protects the right of a woman to have an abortion, if she chooses to do so. In cases where a woman has chosen to exercise her constitutional right to have an abortion, including abortion coverage in the health reform plan will help to keep it safe.

At this time it is unclear whether a provision which allows federal funds to be used for abortions will be included in the final version of the health-care reform package to be considered by Congress. Currently, most American women have private health insurance policies. Eighty percent of these policies provide coverage for abortions. Under any comprehensive health-care reform, private health insurance policies would be drawn under the ambit of an overall federal program. They would be regulated by the federal government, and some—principally those for the unemployed and poor—would be subsidized by the federal government. But no distinction would be made in regulating the policies. If abortion coverage were prohibited, the 80 percent of policies which now include such coverage would have to be changed. I do not believe it appropriate for the federal government to dictate such a prohibition into private insurance policies.

While not covering abortion in the health-care reform plan would make abortion less accessible for many women, history has shown us that women will continue to have abortions, many of which will be carried out by untrained practitioners who will put women's lives at risk.

I believe that many abortions could be avoided by enhancing education about, and the availability of, contraception. For that reason, I have regarded as extremely shortsighted the policies of the Bush and Reagan administrations, which have narrowed, rather than widened, the availability of contraception both here in the United States and abroad. I will be working to undo those policies.

Although our views differ on whether abortion should be included in the health-care bill, I understand your reluctance to pay taxes that will go toward something you oppose. Each of us, however, cannot choose what our tax dollars pay for. For example, there are many pacifists who are opposed to war who are still required to pay taxes—some of which may be put toward weapons systems. Although this is one of the founding principles of democracy, it sometimes means that Americans are asked to help pay for programs they do not support personally.

Thank you again for informing me of your views. Although our views differ on this issue, I do value your opinion. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future concerning this or any other issue.

Sincerely,
JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress
8th District, New York

Dear Congressman:

Thank you for your courteous response to my letter opposing governmental subsidies for abortions. Before responding, let me note that every time I've seen a tally of your voting record I've found myself agreeing with almost all the positions you've taken. But not, despite your letter, on abortion. Allow me to start a second round.

1. Yes, the Supreme Court has said that the Constitution protects "the right of a woman to have an abortion, if she chooses to do so." But on what grounds? Because (the Court said) at least until late in pregnancy abortion is a private matter, and therefore not the proper business of government. Whether or not one accepts that rationale, it does now define the law of the land—and I can't see how you can appeal to it to justify *government subsidies* of abortion.

2. You assert that under a reformed health-care system, a prohibition on government funding of abortion would also prevent abortion coverage under private insurance policies. Why so? The prohibition being sought is aimed solely at preventing use of tax revenues to pay for abortions. I don't know of any constitutional or other legal principle—nor do you cite one—that would make it necessary to impose a ban on abortion coverage by private health insurance policies if subsidizing abortion were disallowed.

3. You point out correctly that in a democracy all must help pay for programs they may not support, and you cite the example of pacifists whose taxes help pay for weapons systems they conscientiously oppose. The example is misleading. Pacifists are a miniscule minority. In contrast, opinion polls report that in the country as a whole (though not, I would guess, in your district), a majority of Americans are opposed to subsidies for abortions.

Granted, nose-counting isn't the sole criterion of democratic legitimacy. But if Congress enacts abortion subsidies it obviously will not be responding to the will of the electorate but rather to the superior funding and more effective lobbying of the prochoice leaders, and to their slicker sloganeering (of this, more below). If you want to know how I feel about that, examine how you feel when the National Rifle Association is able to stall action on gun control, or when the military-industrial complex has decisive clout on issues like the Pentagon budget, or when the oil and tobacco companies call in their chips with legislators on issues of health and the environment.

4. Your strongest argument is based on

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equity: It seems unfair that poor women in desperate situations who want abortions can't have them solely because they can't afford to pay for them. My sympathy for them is almost great enough to make me forget what happens in an abortion. Almost, but not quite; at an improbable age, I'm parenting again, this time as an adoptive father, and I can't forget that our baby girl, with her infinite charm, would not **exist** today had her birth mother chosen to abort. It is because I do face what abortion is that I might be tempted, if abortion subsidies are approved, to join those who will clutter the IRS with their refusals to pay some portion of their taxes—just as, during Vietnam, I refused to pay the telephone excise tax enacted to help pay for that foolish and murderous exercise, and got fined. Some conscientious pacifists go further; they accept prison terms for tax refusal.

Conscientious supporters of abortion rights for poor women have an easier out: With impunity, they could create and fund a private system that would accomplish their goal and satisfy their consciences. Instead, they are deploying most of their resources to achieve passage of legislation that will embody their own beliefs and burden the consciences of a great many other Americans.

I don't question the sincerity of their views (or yours). I do question the integrity of the rhetoric that prochoice publicists employ. "A woman's right to choose" rises above any consideration of what is being chosen. A woman's right to "control her own body" gets complicated when the fate of another body is in question. Of itself, "choice" isn't necessarily a value. A choice made in ignorance may be a bad choice. A choice made in despair over the absence of socially supported alternatives may be a tragic choice.

At its best, the medical profession insists that any decision we make about our bodies must be an *informed* choice. Who would deny it? Yet prochoice leaders oppose any requirement that women seeking abortions be fully informed about what is happening in their bodies and about the possible existence of alternatives to abortion.

5. I agree with you that it is appropriate public policy for the government to promote understanding and use of contraception, but with one proviso that you don't mention. Education about contraception should not carry with it any suggestion of official or societal approval of pre-teen, early-teen, or, for that matter, premarital sex; on the contrary, it should give at least equal stress to the far greater physical, psychic, and social benefits of abstention over the use of contraceptives. Though such emphasis need not and indeed should not be grounded on religious beliefs—it's justifiable in wholly secular terms of common sense and statistics—it would help to accommodate the views of those who oppose contraception as immoral. It's my understanding that some sex education programs that include such an emphasis are effective.

Sincerely,
ROBERT G. HOYT

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

BREAKING THE RULES

AND STARVING THE SPIRIT

It is hard to generalize easily about the work that faces a parish priest, but it is plain that there are a lot of things that can't be taught in any seminary and must be learned, by trial and error, on the job. The experience of other pastors can be helpful, but only up to a point. You learn, among other things, that as helpful as "rules and regulations" may be, they can't be applied in a cookie-cutter fashion. How do you deal, for example, with the question of baptizing a child whose parents are marginally attached to the church, and sometimes not even marginally? How do you handle the case of a couple who want a wedding ceremony, for the sake of their families, but who are really not at all observant? If you take a hard line you might extinguish the little spark that still attaches them to the church, that makes them feel they have a place there; if you are completely lax on the issue, you leave them unchallenged, unlikely ever to have anything more than their current nearly nonexistent relationship to the church.

In a book that will appear in July (*Bending the Rules: What American Priests Tell American Catholics*, published by Crossroad), Jim Bowman interviews twenty-nine American pastors. What emerges is a picture of how Roman Catholic pastors deal with a number of difficult questions.

As someone who has been a pastor (in a small Orthodox parish) for less than two years, I can hardly draw on a long and rich pastoral experience; but I do notice some contrasts—and a few similarities—between the Catholic and Orthodox parochial experience.

One contrast is that on the evidence of this book the most common task of many Catholic priests would seem to be getting around the letter of the law. This impression could be reinforced by the series of questions Bowman posed: he asked priests how they handled the questions of birth control, abortion, marriage and divorce, altar girls and women's ordination, gay and lesbian issues, liturgy, the pope, the liberal-radical argument, and obedience; in addition, what would happen if pastors held to a consistently rigid line with regard to church laws?

For the most part, the answers are not surprising. Most priests reported that laypeople seldom if ever ask about birth control, having made up their minds. They seldom ask about abortion either, except for those who come seeking healing or reconciliation following an abortion. Since the book was put together, the issue of altar girls has disappeared, with Vatican approval of the practice; most priests interviewed here were open to women's

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ordination. In those parishes where it is an issue, gays and lesbians meet compassion and understanding. There is a fair amount of liturgical innovation, and feelings about the pope vary (but there are few unquestioning loyalists here). There was general agreement that a consistently rigid approach would empty the churches. One surprise, for me anyway, was how freely the annulment process was ignored or bypassed, where it proved difficult for a couple to obtain one.

The general impression the book gives is of a number of dedicated, hard-working men who are genuinely devoted to their ministry and to the people they serve. One great similarity is how very parochial parish life really is, in the Catholic as well as the Orthodox church. Of course parishes are, by definition, parochial. But there is little sense—too little, sometimes—of being part of a larger community. One Catholic priest interviewed here says, "We live in the local church—the parish church. People who like their parish are happy with the church. As for statements of pope and bishops, people don't care one way or another. They have enough problems."

There are a few priests who are prone to the odd jargon of clerics who have attended too many workshops: people are "empowered" and one priest is "non-judgmental about people coming back in the conversion modality." Some statements reveal an idea of priesthood I find odd: "Priests are the ones who manipulate the symbols. We need the freedom to do that. If we come to the point where we are restricted I hope it's not for nineteen years, when I will be old enough for my pension...." Others are just wrong: one priest says, "As for receiving Communion, we encourage one with hatred in his heart, who can't forgive, to do so. In the same way with those who practice birth control. You encourage going to Communion." But a person who hates, who can't forgive, certainly should not go to Communion nor be encouraged to do so. Matthew 5:22-24 is fairly clear about this.

This occasional sort of thing isn't as bothersome as another more consistent impression left by *Bending the Rules*. That is that Roman Catholic priests must spend a lot of their time working to get around the law of the church, or explain it away, or present it as an ideal that is often unattainable. With regard to two of the issues here there is a contrast rather than comparison with the Orthodox practice. Orthodoxy tolerates a second and third marriage, but where both of the partners were married before, the language employed in the wedding service is penitential. There is no prohibition of birth control, though a selfish refusal to have children would be considered sinful. On other issues—abortion, gay and lesbian partners, the relationship of priests to bishops—the teachings of the two churches are quite similar. And it is true that in pastoral practice Orthodox also must sometimes invoke *economia*—a practical application of the fact that there are situations in which the letter of the law can do damage to the spirit, and a less-than-ideal situation must be accepted for the good of both the person involved and the larger community.

"I hope he's not going to be one of those narrow-minded guys!"

What I miss in Bowman's interviews, though, is the sense that the Christian life involves ascetic struggle and repentance. Is a second marriage something to arrange as expeditiously as possible? Shouldn't repentance for the failure of a marriage be encouraged, even as continued communion with the church is also encouraged? Many of the priests here are eager for their parishioners to feel good about themselves, to feel at home in their worlds. Everything else in the culture encourages the same feeling—should the church? It isn't a question of wanting people to feel self-loathing, but the church's work is not to echo the *Zeitgeist*. We are not as we should be. The church should offer a context for transformation.

Some conservative Catholics believe that the church has lost an important spirit it once had; liberal Catholics answer that this is an illusion, that the only thing lost is a narrow, Tridentine mentality. However, think of the spirit of French Catholicism between the wars, the sensibility found in the writings of people like Paul Claudel, François Mauriac, and George Bernanos, which seems utterly gone now, as alien to the contemporary Catholic spirit as it could be; or think of the lucid and rich sense of tradition in Flannery O'Connor's letters. This was not a Tridentine narrowness, but a way of thinking that can be found in Saints Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine. There is certainly little of that spirit, little sense of the church as a serious school of spirituality, a challenge to the spirit of the age. This should be an important part of pastoral work, and it may be; but if it is, there isn't much sign of it here.

Perhaps the Catholic sensibility I miss in *Bending the Rules* was never part of parish life in any degree, although I find that hard to believe. Part of the problem might lie in the way the book was framed: if you list items like divorce and remarriage, contraception, etc., and ask Catholic priests how they deal with them you will hear relatively little about spiritual struggle. However, another part of the problem might be that for years these issues themselves were framed not in terms of human transformation, but of obedience to the law on the one hand, and committing sins on the other. Fasting was often seen not as an aid in ascetic struggle and the focus prayer requires, but as a rule. A bishop is quoted here as saying that it was a good thing Vatican II abolished "foolish" fast laws, like Lenten fasting or the fast from midnight before reception of the Eucharist. Is the community really healthier for fasting less than it used to? And is this totally unrelated to the shallowness that shows up in so many innovative and trendy liturgies? Some conservative Catholics, it seems to me, have a valid point. □

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GROWING GRAY WITH GRACE

THE BEST IS YET TO BE

A happy birthday visit with my eighty-one-year-old mother in her retirement home was an occasion for another confrontation with ageism. I'm teaching a course this semester on "aging and mental health," so my classroom analysis of irrational prejudices and stereotypes concerning old people was supplemented by a bit of fieldwork.

Yes, I own up to residual ageism, and so do my students; even some old people themselves have internalized the general distaste for the elderly. "I hate being around a bunch of old people," said one lively minded lady of eighty-plus over dinner. She was contesting my account of research showing that old people are happy in "age dense" settings. The theory is that old people who live together can enjoy the siblinglike bonds of equality available to those sharing a generation. But no, my dinner partner likes to get away to be with young people (those in their sixties?) as often as possible.

My mother, by contrast, is flourishing in this group of retired Army-Navy officers and widows, because she is more socially active than ever before. So much for the "disengagement theory" of aging. Old people who stay flexible, curious, active, and altruistically involved with others have better lives. Mommy heads the Protestant chapel committee, paints, attends a dizzying round of functions, constantly looks out for her friends, and regularly goes over to the nursing wing to help out with the old people over there.

Here, as all over America, people regularly hit their nineties and celebrate their hundredth birthday. There's even a centenarian (retired general's widow) whose son (a retired naval captain) also lives in the residence. Now that's something to think about. In our ever-aging society, how will I get along with my children in the retirement home?

Well, not many in our aging population are going to be happy unless we change those things that make it so difficult to grow old in America. And I don't just mean addressing the economic problems of poverty or inadequate health-care provisions that plague so many elderly people. The cultural ideas and prejudices we inherit are also important.

I've been struggling with ageism, both professionally and personally, ever since I finally admitted that I, like Socrates, am mortal and will inevitably get old. A nice young man actually got up and gave me his seat on the subway the other evening (in New York!), so I know I've got to speed along with the aging-gracefully program.

My approach, not surprisingly, centers on the spiritual development that I judge to be needful. As I look at the old people I know (seventy to eighty-plus), the ones I want to emulate are those living by those religious truths all too easily overlooked during frantic youth or mindless middle age.

When your time on earth is almost over you must overcome America's obsession with time viewed only as the future. Pushing on to ever-expanding future goals is a youthful ideal. It must go. Back to the mystics and their focus on "the sacrament of the present moment," or their consciousness of God's "eternal present." Only grace can liberate us from the bitter bondage of time. After all, the past one has already lived is eternally real, and it can't be taken from you.

Then there's the enslavement to the work ethic. As we age and weaken we must realize that achievement of more and more productivity isn't the end-all and be-all. Contemplation as an appreciative member of the audience has its own value. Loving attention to and enjoyment of the

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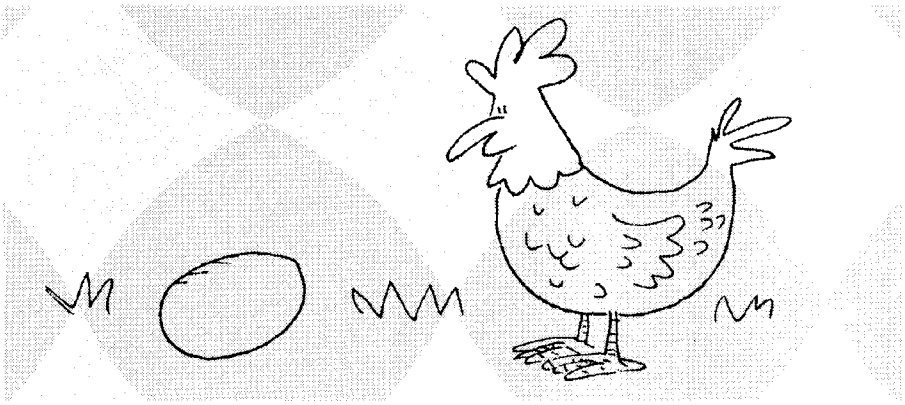

"I just wish I was your age and knew what I know now."

wonders of the world also serve to further negative entropy. Every living nanosecond need not be spent struggling to control the action center stage. Time comes to relax, let go, adore; it's all right to rest.

Obviously aging women have been better prepared for enjoying receptivity than men raised in the macho male cult of "executive will." Old soldiers and other movers and shakers who have commanded the troops do not fade away easily.

Women, however, may suffer more confronting an aging body because our society equates feminine beauty with youthfulness, even with waiflike pubescence. In the beauty business, ripeness is not all. The best way to fight back is to cultivate a sense of one's own bodily being as subject rather than as an object on view for potential admirers and consumers. So take up tai chi, yoga, and hula lessons. Don't look in mirrors or go near cosmetic counters. On the other hand, liberated older women can happily cultivate idiosyncratic dress and jewelry as a form of joyful expression. Canes, I've observed, work well with elegant black pantsuits à la Marlene or with orange-purple gypsy costumes and jingling earrings.

The final spirited defense against old age is the hardest to reach—freedom from fear. If one can face the reality of death, illness, and pain without crumbling, then "consciousness can be bliss." Suffering may lie ahead, but suffering does not have the final word, nor is it meaningless.

Pain can usually be relieved, thank God, with new medical interventions and sophisticated psychological techniques, but illness, loss, and death remain. Accepting and suffering the endgame worthily constitutes the last great challenge of life. Now we see what's at the bottom of the pot, as Montaigne remarked.

Christians who recognize the significance of the Cross do not face their struggle alone, and they have the hope that their suffering will be used. We don't talk anymore about offering up our pain for the souls in purgatory, but some other expression of this truth must be articulated. I love the words of Natan Sharansky, the Russian Jewish dissident persecuted by the KGB, when he describes his "mystical feeling of the interconnection of human souls forged in the gloomy prison-camp world." He came to believe that the brave actions of any one sufferer would benefit all, and "the defeat of any of us had an immediate and painful effect on the others." He continued to suffer bravely for his cause because he was sure that he was influenced by, and would influence, the words and actions of unknown others in "the universal interdependence of souls."

If we exist within the interdependence of souls, or the communion of saints, or as the mystical body, then suffering and loss can be better borne. Of course an American old age is not the same as being a persecuted, tortured concentration camp prisoner, but then it's no picnic either. The inner devils of fear and ageism can only be driven out by a change of heart and an infusion of grace and courage. □

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SALE OF THE CENTURY

BILL CLINTON'S AMAZING ARMS BAZAAR

WILLIAM D. HARTUNG

Bill Clinton didn't say much about foreign policy during the 1992 election campaign, but he did promise to change one of the most pernicious aspects of U.S. policy: this country's role as the world's number-one weapons trafficking nation. The Clinton/Gore team ran on a platform that pledged to "press for strong international limits on the dangerous and wasteful flow of weapons to troubled regions." And in November 1992, President-elect Clinton told a Capitol Hill news conference that he planned to "review our arms sales policy and to take it up with the other major sellers of the world as part of a long-term effort to reduce the proliferation of weapons of destruction in the hands of people who might use them in very destructive ways."

More than a year into Clinton's term, the rhetoric of restraint has given way to an unprecedented arms-selling spree. In fiscal year 1993, the United States sold over $31 billion worth of weaponry to more than 140 nations, the first time any nation had topped the $30-billion barrier.

This is not a case of private enterprise run amok—the federal government is directly involved in the vast majority of these sales, and changes in government policies and practices can have a tremendous impact on the scope of the weapons trade. The primary channel for U.S. arms sales is the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, under which the Pentagon serves as a middleman by negotiating the deal with the foreign purchaser, collecting the funds, and disbursing the money to weapons manufacturing firms. A few billion dollars in sales of smaller weapons systems are made through direct commercial channels, but even these deals must be blessed with a license from the State Department. In theory, Congress can block a major sale if both houses pass resolutions of disapproval that can withstand a presidential veto, but in practice Congress has never voted down a sale.

Has the Clinton administration used its leverage over the arms business to fulfill the promises of restraint that were made in 1992? The short answer is no, and the reason for this inaction can be summed up in a familiar phrase—pork barrel politics. Even during the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton demonstrated his willingness to put aside his commitment to arms transfer controls if he thought it might cost him political support in key states. When a Saint Louis television reporter asked him in August 1992 whether he would back the sale of seventy-two McDonnell Douglas F-15 combat aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Clinton not only said yes, his Missouri campaign office immediately put out a press release broadcasting his support for the deal. The F-15 is built in Saint Louis, and it was clear that Clinton's decision had more to do with the political realities of Missouri than it did with the strategic realities of the Middle East. Amazingly, Clinton's endorsement of the sale came two-and-one-half weeks *before* President George Bush formally announced his decision to go ahead with it.

This tendency to sacrifice the long-term security benefits of arms-sales restraint for the short-term political and economic benefits of arms-sales promotion has carried over into the

"Actually, this dam is just part of a huge arms deal."

WILLIAM D. HARTUNG *is a senior research fellow at the World Policy Institute at the New School for Social Research and the author of* And Weapons for All *(HarperCollins, 1994), a critique of U.S. arms-sales policies from the Nixon through the Clinton administrations.*

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Clinton administration's first fifteen months in office. At the June 1993 Paris Air Show, Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown assured a gathering of U.S. aerospace executives that "we will work with you to help you find buyers for your products in the world marketplace, and then we will work with you to help close the deal." True to his word, Brown held meetings at the air show with defense officials from France and Malaysia at which he urged each of those nations to purchase U.S. military aircraft. At the February 1994 Asian aerospace arms exhibition in Singapore, the Clinton administration went a step further, sending seventy-five U.S. military personnel and twenty military aircraft to the show to help convince Asian military officials to buy American weaponry. This move toward an open partnership between the Pentagon and industry in pushing U.S. weapons overseas was all done at taxpayer expense, to the tune of more than half a million dollars.

Close on the heels of the Clinton administration's decision to have a strong U.S. military presence at the exhibition in Singapore, Air Force Vice-Chief of Staff David Carns floated an even more aggressive marketing scheme. In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, he advocated a plan to sell as many as 400 upgraded F-16 fighter planes out of Air Force stocks to countries such as Egypt, Malaysia, Morocco, Singapore, Thailand, and several Eastern European countries. Proceeds from the sales would then be used by the Air Force to buy new, top-of-the-line F-16s from Lockheed's production line in Fort Worth, Texas. While the plan would clearly offer a boost to the defense industry—both on the front end through contracts to upgrade the planes and on the back end when the revenues from exports are plowed back into new Pentagon procurement—it raises serious questions on both security and constitutional grounds. At a time when regional conflicts in the Middle East and Asia are cited by the Pentagon as the most likely threats to U.S. interests, does it make sense to be doling out sophisticated fighter planes to these areas at bargain prices? Furthermore, doesn't the plan to give the Air Force direct control over the proceeds of U.S. arms exports violate the principle of Congress's "power of the purse" in defense and foreign policy issues, the same principle that was violated by the Iran-*contra* initiatives?

There is no evidence yet that questions of this sort are troubling Bill Clinton or his key advisers as they engage in a long-promised review of U.S. arms transfer policy, scheduled for release later this year. If anything, there are signs that Clinton policymakers have reverted to the cold-war view that arms sales are an all-purpose foreign policy instrument that can be used to solve almost any problem, no matter how complex or intractable. A case in point is Undersecretary of State Lynn Davis's recent proposal to deliver thirty-eight F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan as part of a deal in which Pakistan would agree to "cap" its nuclear weapons program. The plan would not only require an override of the Pressler Amendment, which bars arms sales to Pakistan as long as it is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability, but it would provide Pakistan with a plane that its own military and intelligence officials acknowledge is the most likely delivery vehicle for a Pakistani nuclear bomb! Billions

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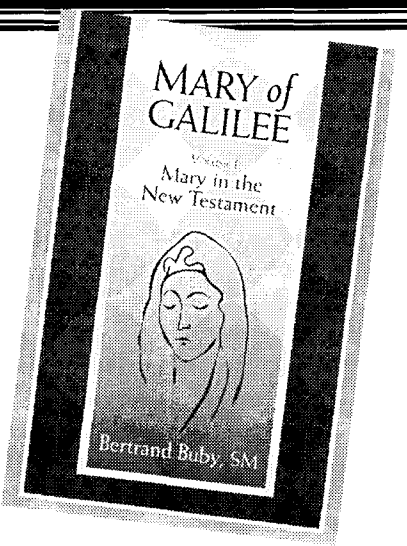
of dollars in U.S. military assistance during the 1980s didn't deter Pakistan from its nuclear program, and a few dozen fighter planes now are even less likely to do so. What the sale probably would do is spur a conventional arms race between Pakistan and India that would make it even harder to get either nation to renounce its nuclear ambitions.

Despite all these signs to the contrary, the battle to get Bill Clinton to honor his campaign promises to curb the weapons trade is far from lost. On another important security issue, the ill-conceived proposal to end the U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing and allow a loophole for so-called "small nuclear tests" that surfaced in the spring of 1993, the Clinton administration beat a hasty retreat in the face of an outpouring of opposition on editorial and op-ed pages, in the Congress, and from peace and arms-control organizations across the nation. The loophole for "small tests" has been shelved for the moment, and the U.S. is continuing to adhere to the moratorium on nuclear testing while pursuing an international agreement for a comprehensive test ban.

While the economic and political forces behind the U.S. arms sales boom are stronger than those favoring nuclear testing, a powerful coalition in favor of controlling the arms trade can be built to counteract the arms export lobby. The successful campaign to ban U.S. exports of antipersonnel land mines, which won a 100 to 0 vote in the Senate last year that extended the U.S. moratorium on exports of these weapons for three years, is a prime example of what is possible if the right connections are made. The land mines moratorium, which is the first step in a campaign aimed at implementing a worldwide ban on the production, export, and stockpiling of these systems, is the result of an unprecedented alliance of organizations that includes the Vietnam Veterans of America, Human Rights Watch, Handicapped International, and the International Committees of the Red Cross.

To address the broader problem of runaway U.S. arms sales, a coalition of 110 local and national peace, human rights, and development organizations, spearheaded by the Washington-based Arms Transfer Working Group, has joined together in support of legislation that would establish a "code of conduct" for U.S. arms transfers. The code, which is embodied in proposed legislation co-sponsored by Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oreg.) and Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), would prohibit arms sales to governments that violate the human rights of their own citizens, engage in aggression against their neighbors, come to power through undemocratic means, or ignore international arms-control arrangements like the United Nations Arms Register. The president would have the right to ask for a waiver if he argued that it was in the national security interest to arm a nation that does not meet these standards, but the Congress would have to pass a law approving that waiver. The code of conduct would not end arms sales in our time, but it would introduce a long-overdue measure of democracy and accountability into decisions over what kinds of regimes and organizations receive U.S. weaponry. Setting

Mary in the New Testament



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higher standards of scrutiny for U.S. arms sales could in turn set the stage for serious multilateral discussions designed to limit sales by all major arms suppliers. Now that the United States sells more arms to the third world than all other nations combined (57 percent of the market as of 1992), a change in policy is a prerequisite for any meaningful international agreement to stem the flow of weapons to regions of potential conflict.

Beyond the question of how successful citizens' initiatives like the code of conduct campaign will be in changing the terms of the debate over arms-sales policy, the Clinton administration may ultimately be persuaded to change its ways for the simple reason that its current approach makes no sense in the violent and disorderly world that has evolved in the wake of the cold war. By even the narrowest of strategic and economic calculations, a policy of active arms-sales promotion has far more costs than benefits.

On the strategic front, unbridled weapons sales help to fuel regional arms races that increase the likelihood that U.S. forces will face heavily armed adversaries when they are sent into battle, either as peacekeepers or in unilateral interventions. The last three times the United States sent troops into combat in significant numbers—in Panama, Iraq, and Somalia—they faced adversaries that had received U.S. weapons or military technology in the period leading up to the conflict. Of four dozen ethnic and territorial conflicts that were under way as of mid-1993, combatants in thirty-nine of those wars had received U.S. weapons during the 1980s. U.S. weapons that were supplied to anti-Communist rebel groups in Angola and Afghanistan as part of the Reagan Doctrine have been used to carry out devastating civil wars; in the Afghan case, U.S.-supplied Stinger missiles have turned up on the international black market as prized items sought by all manner of rebel groups and terrorist organizations. The cold-war notion of using arms sales as a way to maintain regional "balances of power" or support trusted allies has been thoroughly and decisively discredited by the experience of the 1990s, when alliances, governments, and boundaries in large parts of the world are in a state of flux. It doesn't take an arms-control expert to recognize that pouring more weapons onto the world market at this moment in history is a dangerous gamble. A call to put stronger controls on who gets U.S. arms could appeal to a broad, mainstream audience, now that fear of the "Soviet threat" has been eliminated as a knee-jerk rationale for arms sales and military spending.

Economically, arms sales are far less beneficial than the defense industry's public relations machinery would have us believe. The government spends roughly $7 billion per year subsidizing arms exports, for everything from direct grants and loans to finance weapons exports to maintaining a staff of over 5,000 Pentagon and military personnel involved in promoting and processing arms sales. Arms manufacturers further diminish the benefits of arms sales to the economy by offering "offset" arrangements on most major deals. Offsets involve a pledge by the manufacturer to steer business to the purchasing country worth anywhere from 50 to 100 percent of the original sale—an arrangement that often takes business from American companies and gives it to overseas suppliers. As noted above, arms sales fuel regional arms races that in turn are used to justify additional Pentagon spending for "regional contingencies," costing taxpayers tens of billions of dollars in added military budget costs every year. And last but not least, pushing arms on third-world countries stunts their economic growth, reducing demand for other goods and services in the process. An International Monetary Fund study released in late 1993 demonstrated that a 20-percent coordinated reduction in military spending worldwide would stimulate increased markets for consumer goods worth up to $190 billion per year, a sum four-to-five times the size of the entire international arms market. When all these direct subsidies and indirect costs are taken into account, the benefits of the arms trade to the overall U.S. economy are marginal at best.

The oft-heard rationale of last resort for U.S. arms sales—"If we don't do it, somebody else will"—is even less persuasive now than it was during the cold war. The U.S. so dominates the market now that even a unilateral change in policy would have important short-term impacts in stemming the flow of arms to regions of tension. In 1992, the most recent year for which full statistics are available, U.S. sales to the third world were three-and-one-half times greater than those of France, ten times greater than those of Russia, and a hundred times greater than those of China. For the most advanced systems such as top-of-the-line fighter planes and main battle tanks, only a few West European allies sell equipment comparable to that offered by the United States, so it would be relatively easy to limit access to these systems given the requisite political will. For the broader trade in guns, missiles, and other "small arms" that are fueling many of the world's ethnic conflicts, a multilateral effort would be required to achieve meaningful controls. But even at this level, the United States could exert enormous political and diplomatic leverage if it were to adopt a true policy of controlling arms sales and pressuring other major suppliers to do the same.

Once the underlying realities of the arms trade are taken into account, the Clinton administration's arms-sales policy boils down to a combination of pork barrel politics and outmoded cold-war strategic thinking. Only a concerted campaign of public pressure will persuade Bill Clinton to abandon this misguided approach and redeem his campaign pledge to work toward controlling this deadly business. □

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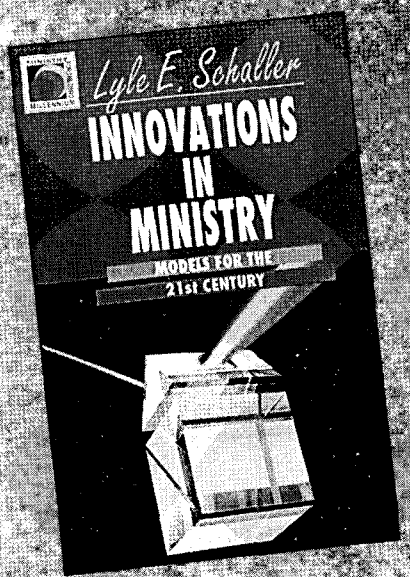

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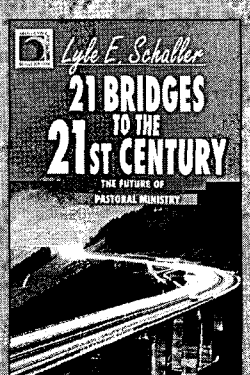

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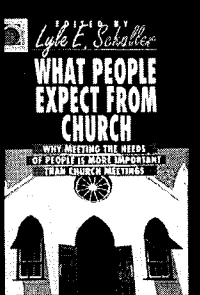

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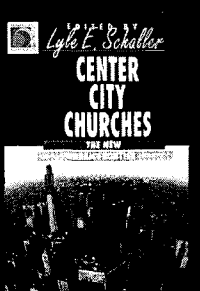

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WHAT THE IMAGINATION KNOWS

PAUL THEROUX'S SEARCH FOR THE SECOND SELF

EDWARD T. WHEELER

At the close of his best-selling travel book, *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975), Paul Theroux reflects that "...the difference between travel writing and fiction is the difference between recording what the eye sees and discovering what the imagination knows. Fiction is pure joy...." In emphasizing recording and discovering, in making fidelity to the truth a standard for the writer, Theroux has obligingly provided a way of discussing his own work. He is a realist in the same sense that painters are representational; he offers us something recognizably human and does not disrupt fictional conventions in doing this. The characters and incidents of his travel books could find themselves (and frequently do) in his novels. And yes, his fiction is joy, but certainly not "pure" in the Sixth Commandment sense of the word.

Theroux was born in 1941 in Medford, Massachusetts, one of seven children of a French-Canadian and Italian Catholic family. In his essay collection *Sunrise with Seamonsters* he tells us of his happy home life, his indifferent high school education ("I was a punk"), his large, extended family, and of a father who happily invited Paul's many friends, rechristening them "Jack," into the family. (The scenes he recounts of the family's summer house on Cape Cod show a warmth which should caution anyone who wishes to read the seemingly confessional novel, *My Secret History*, as an autobiography.) He went on to the University of Massachusetts and, since "[he] distrusted anyone who had not traveled," soon found his way as a college teacher to Africa and then, five years later, to Singapore and finally to London, where he started the trek by train that was to become *The Great Railway Bazaar*. He has been traveling from London, often to Cape Cod and a house which brings him near to his family, ever since. When in 1985 the successful Theroux looked back at his early career he saw "incompleteness...being outside the current of society" as a motive driving him to a life as a writer. He admits, "For years I felt that being respectable meant maintaining a sinister complacency and the disreputable freedom I sought helped make me a writer."

Paul Theroux at fifty-three has written twenty-nine books, more than one a year from the time he started to publish. This prodigious output can be divided roughly into fiction and travel books; the fiction seems to follow the travel, at least for locale and incident. There are the Africa books, the Singapore books, and United Kingdom books. His reputation was made, however, not by the fiction but by *The Great Railway Bazaar* and consolidated (as a travel writer) by five succeeding works. The novel, *The Mosquito Coast* (1982), transformed into a feature film, gave him the final push into international standing, confirmed by *O-Zone* (1986), *My Secret History* (1989), *Chicago Loop* (1991), and *Millroy the Magician* (1994). His fiction ranges as widely as his travel; we find a futuristic dystopia touching its end covers with a children's book, tales of murder in the Midwest next to trials of a Chinese merchant in Africa, expatriates all over the shelf, and, ultimately, first-rate story-telling.

Few can resist Theroux the genial traveler. The pleasures of rereading *The Great Railway Bazaar* are great, especially since his route in 1974 took him through what is now a very different political landscape. Yugoslavia, Iran, the Soviet Union appear from the other side of a historical dividing line; and we read with the wisdom of hindsight. Theroux sets his own high standard for travel, associating it with inconvenience,

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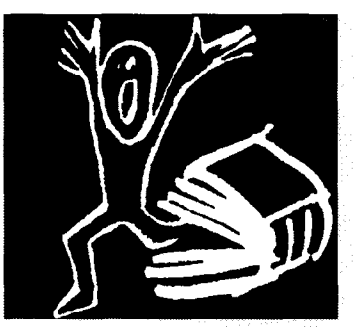

Edward T. Wheeler's critical essay on Paul Theroux is another in our series of articles on contemporary Catholic writers of fiction. We have asked our essayists to give an overview of the author's work, showing our readers where and how this writer locates the central human drama, the big questions, the religious crisis of our time. What does the Catholic sensibility of Paul Theroux tell us about our common world, about the state of our souls? The most recently published article in the series was written by Suzanne Keen on Anthony Burgess (February 11, 1994).

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danger, bad food, sleepless nights, and sees his success as a function of providing that experience vicariously for the reader.

Indeed few people could or would hazard what he encounters. His ability to capture landscape, his eye for architectural detail, and his unfailing willingness to engage his fellow passengers make us want to travel through him, if not with him. Perhaps Theroux's greatest gift is his ability to record dialogue. As he confesses, "Conversationally I am a masochist, and there is nothing I like better than putting my feet up, tearing open a can of beer, and auditing a railway bore in full cry." No one can have nothing to say to Paul Theroux and he recounts for us the great voice of the traveling human road show, be it by rail, sea, or air.

The novels sometimes offer far less congenial pilgrimages of the imagination. His self-confessed desire to travel and for a freedom which defies complacency characterize the thematic drift of Theroux's fiction. But it should be said that unlike a writer such as Graham Greene (with whom he has often been compared), Theroux seldom finds the tensions of his works arising from the tensions of being a Catholic. Indeed, his heroes exercise the disreputable freedom that he sought and presumably found in fiction. The earliest novel, *Waldo* (1967), is funny, picaresque, and prophetic. Waldo, the eponymous hero, does not get beyond the borders of the state of Massachusetts, but he inhabits frontier regions. Waldo begins in a reform school and ends in a freak show. And with typical disreputable freedom, the nineteen-year-old hero has a graphically described affair with an older woman; achieves notoriety by publishing an article on the freakish death of a neighbor; and reaches a resolution of his difficulties by murdering his lover and, encased in a glass booth, suspended above the heads of his audience, by retyping the story which won him fame.

Waldo nods to Nathaniel West's *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* but certainly marks out Theroux's own territory—sexual relations, violent and irrational impulses, freakish happenings, and the role of the writer in connecting the real and the fictional. Theroux's thematic range can be found on the pages of tabloids at the supermarket checkout, but his is a compelling moral fiction. Where is the legacy of his Catholic boyhood? We might see it in his concern with sexuality and guilt, or in the acute self-consciousness which he associates with the sinner in the confessional, but perhaps most of all in the sense of pilgrimage which characterizes his vocation as a writer: one who travels to give witness.

The pursuit of fictional truth is really, in the structured way of art, the working out of the premise: What would life be like if? Theroux's "what ifs?" run to conclusions as one of the famous trains does to a terminus. The journey has an alpha and an omega which spell extremes of personality and experience. But as he also says, rail journeys always end where they begin, and to achieve this rounding of life in art, to take endings to beginnings, Theroux often uses the *dopplegänger* or double figure made most familiar by a literary mentor, Joseph Conrad, in *The Secret Sharer*. The impact of meeting a second self has for Theroux many fictional ramifications: the *dopplegänger* device not only provides a taut plot structure but becomes a way of explaining the relationship between writer and subject and writer and reader. In *My Secret History,* for example, the double helps to define the creative process. How does this device with the peculiar German name work such magic? To answer, we must allow books to talk to books and understand Theroux by way of Conrad.

Books discussed in this essay

Waldo, *Ballantine, $4.95, 227 pp.*
Jungle Lovers, *Ballantine, $3.95, 262 pp.*
Fong and the Indians, *Houghton Mifflin, $9.95, 199 pp.*
Saint Jack, *Houghton Mifflin, $14.95, 247 pp.*
Picture Palace, *Houghton Mifflin, $9.95, 359 pp.*
The Mosquito Coast, *Avon, $4.50, 374 pp.*
The Great Railway Bazaar, *Washington Square Press, $7.95, 342 pp.*
Sunrise with Seamonsters, *Houghton Mifflin, $7.95, 365 pp.*
Half Moon Street, *Washington Square Press, $5.95, 219 pp.*
My Secret History, *Ivy, $5.95, 511 pp.*
Chicago Loop, *Random House, $18.95, 196 pp.*

In *The Secret Sharer* the narrator, a ship's captain on his first command, gives help to an escaped prisoner with whom he finds affinity and later identity. The narrator is forced to confront himself, to recognize in the "secret sharer" his own capacity for evil—in this case murder—and face a moral decision: keep the double's existence secret and be complicit in the crime, or reveal him and betray him to injustice. The narrator "saves" his double and so expands and integrates his sense of self. The process is cathartic in the strict sense of the word: the narrator must internalize the double's crime and take responsibility for his flight and escape; he experiences pity, fear, and a liberating purgation. In many of Theroux's later novels, this plot structure and this process work as it did for Conrad. Theroux uses it, often ruthlessly, to explore "what the imagination knows" but would rather not speak.

And there is another complication. If the double is read as a projection of the narrator's own consciousness, the device is a metaphor for the activity of the novelist as well. In Theroux's own words, "discovering what the imagination knows" comes about by meeting the possibilities inherent in the double's life. It this sense, Theroux continues the role ascribed to a novelist like Dickens, one in which the writer is cast as reporter of the real yet unfamiliar, a guide to the underworld hidden from ordinary daylight. Theroux is not a Dickensian stylist nor is he a social reformer, but his moral imagination can be seen to offer

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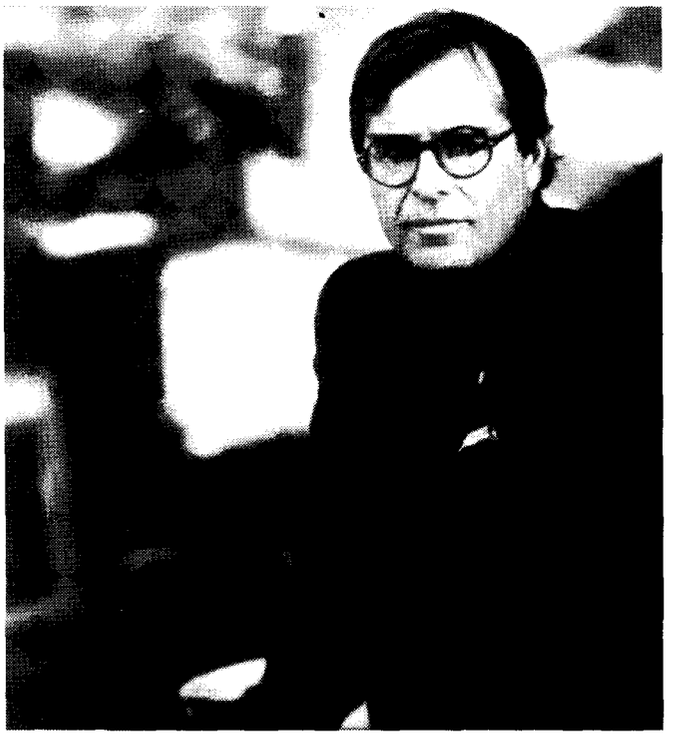

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us a truth otherwise inaccessible. For example, *Jungle Lovers* (1971), provides us with considerable knowledge of Africa. Here is the initial premise: What happens if Calvin Mullet, a Massachusetts insurance salesman, opens a branch office in Malawi at the moment a revolution starts? He lives a life which is doubled with Marais, a Canadian ideologue gone Maoist in revolt. Their fates are paralleled and give us two ends of a spectrum: white people trying to understand and, in some sense, use Africans. The book is about *not* understanding Africa, or about regretting mistakes in interpreting the "parish" of Malawi—a country that exists only as an act of faith.

I suppose this is what novels do best, explain us to ourselves. We rely on Theroux in *Jungle Lovers* to explain our responses to Africa. In other novels we come to know Singapore and Central America, and, moving within, the mind of a murderer, a pimp, a Ph.D. call girl, an American in self-exile on the Honduran Mosquito Coast. The distance Theroux maintains from the protagonists, Calvin in *Jungle Lovers*, for example, offers leeway: he swings in arcs of perspective moored to a sympathetic if limited consciousness. We warm to Calvin, see as he sees, and learn from him, but ultimately see beyond him: the novel's close suggests his newborn son might not be his, yet Calvin imagines a stunning return to Hudson, Massachusetts, with his black African wife and "tar baby" child. The white man will bring a most ambiguous burden home from the tropics.

Saint Jack (1973) replays *The Secret Sharer* even more closely; Jack, an American expatriate in Singapore, finds a new sense of integration when he recognizes the essential similarity between himself and his double. The scene of moral crisis and triumph is typical of Theroux's fiction. Jack has contracted to supply incriminating photographs of an American general. But he is seduced by the call girl he has hired to bait the trap for the general who, in the interim, has found his own whore. Mimesis moves to interesting climaxes as Jack sees that if he were to incriminate the general he would condemn himself. He redeems self and other. Sex is grace in this novel, dispensed by Saint Jack in his role as "ponce" or procurer, and saving sexual grace is ultimately visited on him. Theroux has his ex-U.S sailor also tell us of the crisis of middle age, of the fears of young American servicemen on R&R from Vietnam, and of the machinations of the CIA. The arresting aspect of this novel is Theroux's projection of character: he imagines himself into the consciousness of a considerably older man. Similarly, in the story "Dr. Demarr" in *Half Moon Street* (1984), we encounter twins who are tied in the womb to identical fates. Theroux uses this bit of yarn to look at drug addiction, problems of identity, and nasty betrayal of brother by brother.

The double life is the single topic of *My Secret History*. Its narrator, Andy or Andre Parent, tells his life story which apparently doubles that of his creator, Paul Theroux! We are warned at the start, however, that the narrator is not the author. ("*I* am not I"—so Theroux in his epigraph quoting Evelyn Waugh whose *Gilbert Pinfold* worked similar terrain.) Paradoxically, everything that links Paul Theroux and Andre Parent also points to that which separates them. The constraints of fact or the confessional honesty we would expect from autobiography are not required in such a work. Other concerns shape the narrative; apparent revelations about the real Paul Theroux come as a halted strip tease—we suspect that the bare truth is inaccessible but would be rather ordinary if we were to get beyond the imaginative make-up. Undoubtedly this is one way a public figure like Theroux deals with himself in that double role as private person and writer.

The "Altar Boy" section, which opens the novel, grounds the concept of secret history in a scene, the sacristy before Mass, and a situation, cassock and white surplice covering the sinner inside. Theroux's Andy hears: "an interminable whisper of suggestion that I was weak and sinful, and the sense that I was always wrong....There was something natural and unavoidable about being bad."

This is a wry and unsentimental look at a fifties Catholic boyhood: Andy listens, ears burning, to his co-server's sexual exploits as they swig altar wine; alcoholic Father Furty shows Andy a human warmth that incarnates the sacred; and the pastor, a terrifying martinet, acts as a surrogate angry-god and drives Andy into disreputable freedom. "God was always glaring at me out of a hot sky. He was as pitiless and enigmatic as most of the adults I knew—they all spoke for Him anyway—and He said no just as often."

Theroux reminds us of the peculiar feel of ritual Latin on the tongue, the loony tensions of altar boy solemnity (the litany of altar boy gaffes is worth reading in its own right), the tussle over who rings the bells, the routine of funeral Masses. The vividness of the detail and the ease of the telling show mastery. But the pattern of the novel uses the secret life for ends other

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than nostalgia: "...at that age I belonged to no one, and then to everyone, because I didn't matter. There was no such thing as my privacy. If someone didn't spy on me it wasn't out of respect, but because they thought I had no secrets." This anchors the writer's sense of identity: one who is detached yet open to experience, the observer, never the observed.

My Secret History offers intriguing insight into the way writers work, a particular yet fictional examination of conscience of the self who thinks and acts. The successful man of letters, Andy, leads a secret and finally a double life, two countries on two continents, two houses, two women, two selves. A chance notice of his reflection in a train window (naturally) causes this other sort of reflection:

> ...I saw there was a third person. He was the observer, the witness to all this...the one who stood aside and made the notes and wrote the books. His life was lived within himself. He was silent, he seldom gestured, he never argued, he dreamed, he saw everything and so he was the one who suffered.

This rather Christlike third person offers one version of the writer's vocation:

> One of the greatest things that writers did, I thought, was to isolate an event, and light it with the imagination, to make people understand and remember; and not just events, but people and their passions. Forgetting was much worse than failure: it was an act of violence. For all writing aimed at defeating time. No one could become a writer—no one would even care about it until he or she experienced the impartial cruelty of time passing.

Redeeming time sounds suspiciously soteriological and the Trinitarian formulations point to a notion of the artist in some way religious. We can recall here Theroux's assertion that a travel writer undergoes ordeals which his readers could never brook: he is the servant who suffers and then brings order.

Theroux's 1991 work, *Chicago Loop*, is in many ways his most difficult; it exploits the double structure, almost chiastically, with the central crossing a murder. Parker, the protagonist, lives as a successful architect and inner-city developer and a secret correspondent and solicitor in personal ads. He murders grotesquely a woman who answers his ad and then assumes that woman's life. *Chicago Loop* has the psychological nightmare quality of *Crime and Punishment*, and a similar plot—but there is no Sonia to redeem Raskolnikov. Parker's is not a crime instigated by inhuman pride, the mind over heart which gives the superman his place in history. This is libido as explosive and demanding. At one point Parker and his wife visit the Mapplethorpe exhibit and discuss the photographs. It is characteristic of Theroux that he should explore the morality of art in his work, asking, as we are told Mapplethorpe's photographs ask, for recognition that people do terrible things to each other. And in fictional fashion Theroux can both affirm and deny that assertion by allowing the plot of the novel to exhibit the moral horror of what people do to each other, as aggressors and victims.

The truth of this novel is Dionysian; dark and bloody drives move the hero to consume his victim, and then in the act of expiation and rebirth take on her identity. Parker becomes a victim of men; in his transvestite meanderings through Loop-land, he suffers what men do to women and he knows what men want because he did once so want. Parker can release himself only in suicide, a spectacular rejection of his body in a leap off the Sears Tower. The artistic patterning which constrains the violence of the plot asks a reader to reconsider notions of truth and the morality of fiction. The writer takes on the burden of experience, this fallen world, and with the imagination's guidance, he discovers for and with us "what the imagination knows." There is a high seriousness about Theroux's fiction that gives the writer, stilling time and gathering for his audience that which might be forgotten, a status which is both sacred and priestly.

As Theroux's travel books live by their recreation of verbal intercourse, his novels seem to take their energy from the sexual sort. *Saint Jack* and *Chicago Loop* represent the ends of the spectrum and Theroux travels with characteristic vividness along the continuum of changes that sex rings on us. Sex is one of the facts of life; what it does to us, and what we do with it, comes as part of the novelist's territory. One can't but admire the powerful libidos of various characters, but there is seldom joy in the telling: Calvin Mullet comments on the anonymity of sex and the many graphic scenes lead characters not so much to the sadness after coition but to self-reflection. The most phys-

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ical way of coming out of ourselves or of accepting another is also the most isolating—except, as Theroux suggests on occasion, for the joy of procreating children.

Most readers cannot match in breadth or intensity the experiences Paul Theroux presents; yet it is the burden of realist fiction to convince us that the characters matter, that their conflicts and emotions are meaningful, and that the pattern of art in some way contains the ragged ends of life. The success of his travel books indicates how well he convinces others of the truth of what he has seen. His fiction, and I borrow here from his own reference to Mapplethorpe's exhibit, frequently forces us to admit that people do do such things to one another. The earlier novels, *Fong and the Indians* (1968) in particular, have a lightness of tone which beguiles. But later works, *Picture Palace* (1978) and those which follow, have a seriousness and intensity which convince but also appall. Theroux takes us into regions of the heart and mind we often would not go by ourselves "to make people understand and remember; and not just events, but people and their passions." For that courage to follow his imagination we are in his debt. □

Virginia V. Hlavsa

Connecting the Dots

Finches, gold, dot the air,
the trees. Teaming, they hop,
light bulb over light bulb up
the willow's weeping leads.
Disguised, they have been there
all winter, alloy-hazed.
They have been there longer.
Twelve hundred years ago
and more, Ch'ien Ch'i, seeing
their spring flare-ups flashing
through the Imperial Grove
in the Forbidden City,
thought of his poems, still
hidden gold, thought of them
as shame to his white hairs.

SCREEN

WHAT'S ENTERTAINMENT?

'THE PAPER' & 'PROXY'

The Paper zips along but how could it not? Ron Howard's movie, scripted by Stephen and David Koepp, is not only a triumph of filmmaking energy but an ode to energy itself, urban and amoral. This story of twenty-four hours in a newspaper's life doesn't say that any job worth doing is worth doing well. It says that big city success depends upon beating out your opposition. And if beating out your rivals means that you must teeter on the edge of nervous breakdown for sixteen hours a day, six days a week—all the better! Only squares and dopes want to live ulcer-free lives.

In the course of pursuing a story, metropolitan editor Michael Keaton and colleagues uncover the truth about the frame-up of a couple of black kids for a mob murder, but their triumph lies not in clearing the kids (the police had no intention of holding them anyway—the arrest was made to calm tourists) but in beating out the other newspapers to the story.

The Paper is a direct descendant of *The Front Page* in its celebration of reporters not as crusaders but as swashbuckling predators of the urban jungle. *The Front Page* ethos is Nietzschean, but in the American grain. Professionalism is the only ethic and, for the sake of professionalism, practically anything goes. The sleepless milieu in which such professionalism thrives breeds wisecracks, dementia, bursts of hilarity and bad temper, backstabbing, comradeship, and startling reversals of fortune. All of which add up to comedy if the story is in the right hands, as it is here.

The last film version of *The Front Page* was a waxworks exhibit because director Billy Wilder and his cast seemed all too conscious that they were working on a classic. What was missing was believable bustle, kinetic grace, and hairsbreadth timing. All those qualities abound in *The Paper*. The whole cast is wired. Michael Keaton's surging eyebrows (a match for Jack Nicholson's any day), Robert Duvall's football coach gesticulation, and Glenn Close's mad-hag, gimlet-eyed propulsiveness give this script all the demonic energy it needs. But perhaps the most striking performance is Randy Quaid's, because this actor dares to use a slow tempo that neatly counterpoints the predominant clatter and chatter. His character, an amiably paranoiac city-hall investigator, seems to float in an unbreakable glass bubble in the midst of a raging sea.

I was one of the few critics unimpressed by Ron Howard's *Splash*. For me, the director lacked economy and often drove a scene past legitimate comic frenzy into klunkiness. That isn't true here. Howard always keeps things up to speed but never sacrifices lucidity and grace. The reporters bustle all over New York but Howard has found a surprising visual unifier for this story of print journalists: TV. There are television sets on in

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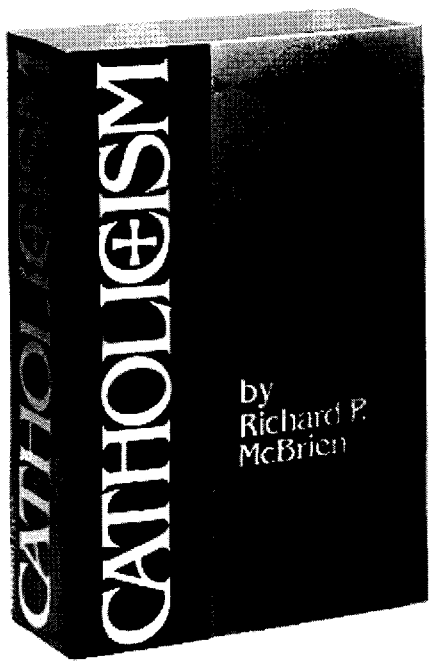

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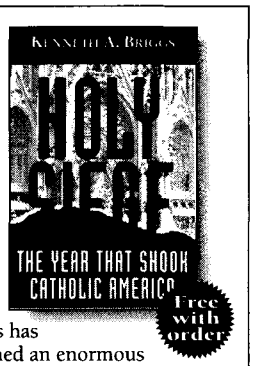

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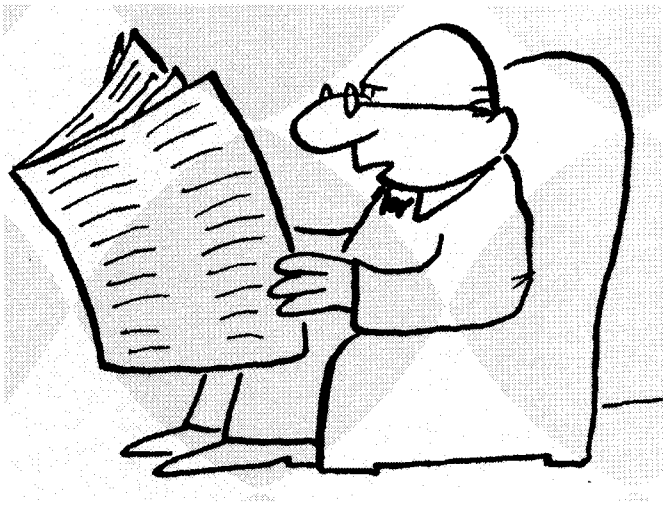

"You call that *news?"*

the city room and individual offices and also in the bar to which Duvall retreats and in the ghetto apartment of the kids about to be framed. Sooner or later, Howard's camera always floats over to TV. And how appropriate this is. For TV is the electronic life-and-death ray that keeps the print reporters posted on latest developments but is also the Great Enemy. Always faster and brighter and glibber than the gaudiest tabloid, the Tube can be beat only when the reporters come up with the Scoop of Scoops which...TV will instantly transmit to the nation before the morning edition is ten minutes old.

Because cynical reporters have satirical temperaments, critics are tempted to label all stories about them as satires. But *The Paper* is no more a satire than *The Front Page* is. Satire tries to chasten immorality, but *The Paper* celebrates the amoral energy of its heroes. The revelation of this movie's heart is in the cross-cutting that provides the story with its climax. A target of his muckraking has drawn a gun on Quaid in a bar. Cut to Marisa Tomei (as Keaton's pregnant wife) hemorrhaging and the unborn baby's heartbeat growing fainter while doctors and nurses scramble. Cut to Glenn Close trying to reach a phone to kill a front-page story so that the real scoop can be substituted.

Will Quaid eat the maniac's gun?
Will the baby and mother live?
Will the scoop be printed?
Is there any hierarchy of importance here?
Nope. Hey, news is news.

I suppose *The Hudsucker Proxy* might pass as satire or at least as a satirical fairy tale. It certainly qualifies as an overdesigned, fatuous bore.

Proxy is a modern variant of *Candide*. A business school graduate (Tim Robbins) is catapulted into the presidency of a big company through the machinations of a scheming executive (Paul Newman). An investigative reporter (Jennifer Jason Leigh) holds our innocent up to public ridicule, then falls in love with him. Through pluck, luck, and the intervention of an angel, our hero triumphs. Brechtian irony is intended here. If our hero needs an angel to bail him out, the world is an evil place, indeed.

But no Brechtian skill is in evidence. The style of this movie is German expressionism crossed with *Mad* magazine, potentially an interesting hybrid. But its creators, the Coen brothers—Ethan and Joel—strain, strain, *strain* for effects. You can tell that they want every scene to sing its virtuosity but I heard only screaming, literal and figurative. One cinematic trope that you have to endure repeatedly: someone in mid-shot shouts and the camera then zooms forward as if it would leap down the actor's throat.

The shots are so strenuously composed—crowds in V formation and so forth—that they look like the stills put in stage-directing textbooks to teach novices how to group actors. At times, I thought I was looking at the director's storyboard preparation rather than the mounted scene.

The acting is overdesigned, too. Poor Leigh, a truly talented and steadily improving actress, has been ordered to imitate Katherine Hepburn and she wears the directorial decision like a straitjacket. John Mahoney, as an exasperated newspaper editor, has to snarl and sweat like all those actors in the 1930s' comedies who played the same part. Mahoney fumes dutifully but is not interesting. (How deftly Robert Duvall humanizes his comparable role in *The Paper*.) Even the great Paul Newman is reduced to monochromatic rasping and gloating. The others in the cast might as well have strings attached to their arms and legs for all the creativity or humanity they get to show. Only Tim Robbins manages to break through the robotic Coen regime with a sort of saintly goofiness. The look of moronic bliss on his face as he demonstrates a hula hoop is the only pleasurable memory I took away from this movie.

What's wrong about Coen moviemaking is clearly demonstrated by one of *Proxy*'s cleverer sequences. Newman has fallen out of a high window and Robbins has caught him by his trouser legs. Will the material hold or will Newman drop to his death? Close-up of trouser stitches beginning to give way as Robbins pulls. Flashback: Newman's tailor asks the executive if he wants single or double stitching. Newman sneers that the tailor is only trying to make a buck and that the cheaper single stitching will do. Cut to: the stitches continuing to unravel; terrified look on Newman's face as he remembers sartorial decision. Second flashback: the tailor, alone, decides to put in double stitching for free because Newman is "such a nice man." Cut to: the stitches hold! Newman is saved!

Clever, huh? Yeah, but why does that tailor think that Newman is such a nice guy? We have seen him behave like a bastard to everyone, including the tailor. That's the trouble with the Coens. They can dream up neat stuff, but they never really think about their characters, their story, or their fundamental aims.

The Paper has no idiosyncratic style. There's no shot or sequence in it that makes you exclaim, "Pure Ron Howard!" But *The Paper* entertains. *The Hudsucker Proxy*, on the other hand, has directorial signature stamped on every frame. No one makes movies like the Coens do. No one should want to. Not even the Coens.

RICHARD ALLEVA

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Telling the whole story

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

Book discussed in this essay

The Death of the Messiah from Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives of the Four Gospels, *Raymond E. Brown, The Anchor Bible Reference Library, two volumes, Doubleday, $75, 1,595 pp.*

The publication shortly before Easter of this massive study of Our Lord's Passion and death was timely not only for its appearance in the appropriate liturgical season, but more significantly for giving expression to solid and sane scholarship in a time of sensationalism and empty speculation.

Those whose taste is for the novel, and whose appetites have been whetted by the recent efforts of the "Jesus Seminar," with its publication of *The Five Gospels* (Macmillan), and Burton Mack (*The Lost Gospel*, HarperSanFrancisco), with his forays into the Q community, and John Dominic Crossan (*The Historical Jesus*, HarperSanFrancisco), whose recent large and smaller books on Jesus depend heavily on social scientific theory and complex source theories, will find little to please them in this book.

The Father Brown who devoted two large volumes to exhaustive analysis of the Gospel of John and then a third to the Johannine Letters, who constructed still another monument providing "everything you ever wanted to know about the birth of the Messiah," was not likely to squander ten years of labor on this task shaping headlines for *USA Today*. Here is a scholar who has devoted a lifetime to demonstrating to a church, which in his youth disallowed such efforts, and equally to a scholarly guild that discredited such efforts, that it is possible to combine faithfulness to the church with critical scholarship. This book, focused on the primordial scandal of the crucified Messiah, a subject ripe for distortion and rife with controversy, does nothing to discredit those years of service. If later in this review I chip at the mountain at one place or another, let me register from the start that I know a mountain when I see one.

First of all, then, the obvious. This is a large production. It spans two volumes, containing almost 1,600 pages of prose at its most prosaic, some 72 pages of closely spaced bibliographic entries, and 275 pages of appendices as chaser. This is not a quick read. Nor is it an easy one. Raymond Brown offers no teasers or hooks. He has no new theory or explosive hypothesis to spring on the reader. The story still turns out the same way. Instead, as he helpfully states in his first paragraph, he seeks "to explain in detail what the evangelists intended and conveyed to their audiences by their narratives of the Passion and death of Jesus."

To do this, Brown chose to write a commentary. The reader is led through the text word by word. Those who know Brown's earlier works will find here his accustomed uniform and punctilious attention to every detail. Nothing escapes detection, dissection, discussion. Although every commentary works through the text sequentially, the structuring of the text and the discussion can have considerable consequences, some of them unintended. Brown's commentary considers the Passion as a drama divided into four acts: (1) Jesus' prayer and arrest in Gethsemane; (2) Jesus before the Jewish authorities; (3) Jesus before Pilate; (4) Jesus' death and burial.

Each of these acts, in turn, is broken into separate scenes. For each section of text under consideration, Brown provides a highly literal translation of each version containing that segment (including the parallels in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter). The translation is followed by "comment," which takes up the

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON *is professor of New Testament at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. He is the author of* The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation, *and* Faith's Freedom: A Classic Spirituality for Contemporary Christians *(both Fortress).*

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specific text-critical, linguistic, thematic, and comparative questions pertinent to the passage. Then Brown turns to "analysis," which takes up debates concerning the literary formation of the narratives together with their fictional or historical qualities.

Such complex considerations are necessary because Brown recognizes that the Passion narratives are complex compositions. Simple solutions for the problems posed by their origin, literary interdependence, historical reliability, and theological intentions are probably wrong to the degree that they are simple. Brown characteristically considers virtually every scholarly position on all these questions, sifts through them, and arrives at a judicious conclusion concerning each.

At the literary level, Brown goes against a major segment of recent scholarship, for example, which considers Mark to have created the Passion narrative. Brown argues that characteristics of all versions of the Passion, together with clues provided by other early writings (such as the Letters of Paul and Hebrews), lead to the opposite conclusion: there were at least pre-Markan Passion traditions, most probably in some ordered sequence. On the other hand, Brown considers every attempt to reconstruct that pre-Markan Passion as futile, offering in evidence a lengthy appendix showing (with the help of Marion Soards) the multiple and mutually contradictory conclusions reached by such efforts.

In similar fashion, he rejects Crossan's ingenious hypothesis that the canonical Passion accounts derived from an early version of the apocryphal Gospel of Peter. Another appendix is devoted to the argument that the relationship is better understood as running the opposite way, with the Gospel of Peter using the canonical versions, as well as various embellishments picked up through oral tradition. Brown also takes the position that Mark is the source for both Matthew and Luke. In opposition to another school of scholars, he argues that Luke did not use a separate Passion account, but rather worked creatively with Mark and some extra materials. Matthew also used Mark and had access to the same sort of folkloric traditions that enlivened his infancy narrative. John's narrative is independent of the synoptics but taps into some of the traditions shared by the synoptics.

Although Brown spends an extravagant amount of space debating these issues, his intended focus is on the meaning of the narratives as we now have them. He recognizes that the narratives are less satisfying as history than as witness and interpretation. He consistently moves from the smallest details of language to the overarching themes that characterize each of these accounts, as well as their progress through the entire narrative of the respective Gospels. Thus, despite the remarkable closeness of Matthew's and Mark's versions, Brown shows how Matthew's slight alterations and additions add to Mark's depiction of bleak abandonment an even more "haunting issue of responsibility" involving the Jewish people. He traces out Luke's distinctive shading of that issue of responsibility, which shows a Jewish population divided in its response to Jesus rather than uniform in its rejection. Luke's Jesus, in turn, is a more active, philosophical character, who until the very end continues to heal and reconcile and save. And the Jesus in John's Passion is even more in control, even more emphatically a figure of triumph. Brown demonstrates how these separate tellings of the story yield an astonishingly rich mosaic of meaning.

Yet Brown avoids the unhappy choice between history and fiction. He understands that beneath interpretive shaping there can still reside historical fact. And his search for it gains credibility by his willingness to recognize places where it can't be found, as in Matthew's apocalyptic "events" accompanying the death of Jesus. Brown finds a not inconsiderable core of history within these accounts: not only the brute fact of "crucified under Pontius Pilate," but also the high probability of active involvement by Jewish leadership, and some hints as to why Jesus' activities might have generated substantial opposition. Among the rich features of these volumes are the substantial essays devoted to such topics as: "The Background for the Jewish Trial/Interrogation of Jesus," and "Background for the Roman Trial of Jesus." In these essays, Brown demonstrates his remarkable ability to distill masses of scholarship on complex issues to clear and intelligible form. The same can be said for the essays found in the appendices, dealing with such disparate topics as the date of the Crucifixion, and the career of Judas Iscariot, the scriptural background to the Passion accounts, and the likelihood of Jesus' having predicted his death.

But there is also something of the antiquarian and curiosity seeker in this scholar, revealed in his refusal to let any topic go undiscussed. Brown not only considers every textual variant and every troublesome point of translation (another appendix given to the worst of these!), but he toils over the medical aspects of Jesus' death, and the attitudes of Romans concerning the disposition of crucified bodies, and (with a slight smile) the in-

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cidence of cock-crowing in Jerusalem. Brown is not content with a broad characterization of, let us say, Josephus's view of bandits. He demands of himself and his reader a close consideration of every passage in which Josephus considers them.

The more one is acquainted with the difficulties of negotiating scholarship on the ancient world, the more awesome Brown's working through of such minutiae with such steady attention appears. This really is a mountain. Yet it is precisely the overwhelming comprehensiveness of the work which suggests some limits to its usefulness. I have in mind here some of the compositional decisions that have made this a better compendium of information than a challenging interpretation of narratives.

First, Brown himself recognized that his decision to comment on all four versions of each portion of the narrative together was debatable, but decided that its benefits exceeded its drawbacks. Some readers will disagree, finding the arrangement clumsy, tending (despite Brown's strong intentions and best efforts) toward harmonization, and creating needless repetition. Questions considered in the "comment" are often revisited in the "analysis," precisely because Brown is juggling too many texts and issues at once.

Second, Brown's lengthy consideration of each and every detail inevitably makes it difficult, even for the best prepared reader, to follow the thread of argument, much less of interpretation. The book is peppered with mini-essays and scholarly disquisitions. Observation follows observation, distinction builds on distinction, with inexorable energy and logic. These sometimes distended discussions distract from the larger argument, so that Brown is forced into numerous transitions, resumptions, summaries, and conclusions. Sensitivity to this problem may have led to the wonderfully clear and simple expositions that now begin the book. There, Brown lays out his purposes, and provides a helpful sketch of the theological perspectives of each evangelist's version. This is a help, but not a complete remedy.

Third, the effect of these factors—whether Brown intended this or not—is to place far more attention on questions of source-criticism and history than on questions of meaning. It is perhaps telling that, after working through so much data and so many debates, Brown comes to a rather abrupt end with debates about the burial, and then continues with the appendices that take up further debates. The reader of these most puzzling, provocative, and paradoxical accounts hungers, at the end, for something more than "explanation."

If there has been a consistent complaint about Raymond Brown's previous commentaries, it has been precisely this one. There is no one anywhere better at laying out the issues, surveying the options, *explaining* the problems. But explanation does not move automatically to interpretation. And it is here that scholarly readers, while still immeasurably grateful for the "explanation," will challenge Brown on specific points of interpretation. One can appreciate, for example, the precise delineation of the debates concerning Mark's "naked young man" who flees at the arrest of Jesus, yet find Brown's rejection of possible intertextual connections curiously flat. One might admire his review of the data concerning Herod in history and in Luke's narrative, yet come to quite another reading of Herod's role within that narrative. Or one might find his lengthy discussions of the proper understanding of *kathizein* in John—or the significance of Nicodemus's bringing of spices to the burial—models of dispassionate argument, yet come to conclusions precisely the opposite of his.

Yet for each such point of disagreement, Brown himself provides the evidence! And that, in an age of rigged arguments and specious claims, is testimony to the greatness of his accomplishment. There has certainly never been a more complete, better informed, more fairly or more carefully argued consideration of the Passion narratives. It is a resource for anyone seeking genuine learning and disciplined debate on this most challenging of narratives. And it appears at a good time. □

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A tale of two peoples

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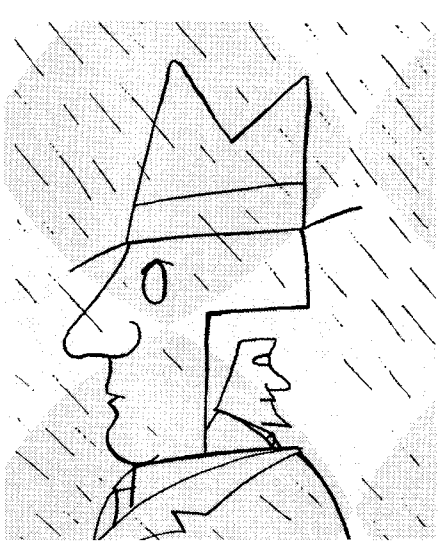
Elizabeth Beverly

Several years ago, Ian Buruma, a Dutch-born journalist and essayist living in England, with well-established ties to Japan, decided to learn more about Japanese memories of World War II, and the relation of these to a resurgence in Japanese nationalism. It appeared that many Japanese, embracing Hiroshima as a symbol, saw themselves most centrally as victims of Allied aggression, not as guilty perpetrators of a brutal war themselves. They still placed a high value on self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation, discipline, racial purity, and other attributes that the Japanese had in common with the Germans during the war.

When Buruma went to Germany, he discovered that many Germans felt deeply uncomfortable about their national past, embarrassed by those attributes the Japanese continue to embrace and from which they benefit economically. For Germans, Auschwitz had become the symbol of the war, and the collective memory, with some variations between East and West Germany, tended to be driven by guilt. Despite the apparent differences in self-image between these former allies, it seemed to Buruma that many Japanese and Germans share a common conviction that they, as national powers, cannot and should not be trusted. They cannot trust even themselves.

Memory. War. National identity. Moral integrity. Guilt. Self-trust. These are some of the massive, ungainly, fundamentally important issues that inform Ian Buruma's latest book: *The Wages of Guilt*. It is a book marked by exceptionally rich material, including interviews with politicians, protestors, petty bureaucrats, aging veterans, artists. It also includes analyses of films and novels, soap operas and textbooks. Buruma visits museums and war memorials, sites of former destruction, and of postwar architectural disarray. His is a roving and inclusive mind, turning to the landscape, following leads, pausing to listen carefully to the people he encounters. The heart of his book lies in its multivocality; the pages brim with the excitement of Buruma's acute curiosity, and his impulse to gather evidence for his inquiry.

During a first encounter with the book, this enthusiasm and richness, while not totally satisfying, are perfectly compelling. The basic topics around which the book is structured—the perception of the Gulf War, the question of atrocities, the role of the Allies in shaping peacetime consciousness, the outcome of war trials, the use of memorials and museums—and Buruma's intention to cover each country responsibly, keep the reader busy. But still there is the sense of being on a somewhat giddy tour with an extremely knowledgeable guide who would love to sit down and discuss, *really* discuss, what he's just shown you, but gee whiz, look at the clock! It's time to load the bus and be off! The resulting sense of rushed inconclusion is ultimately unnecessary and disturbing.



For me, this hurriedness focuses a rather disarming attention on Buruma himself, on his intentions and will. Clearly, he inhabits his text fully: not only has he structured it, but he keeps reminding the reader of his physical presence. He goes drinking in Japan, suffers from the heat in China, is moved by the Warsaw ghetto, and watches laughing Japanese school children pass by memorial shrines. This willful reminder of self, far from being annoying, is deeply welcome. I had the sense of being taken by the hand into conversations and realms of memory where I could not otherwise venture. I am there because of him. But once there, Buruma seems unwilling to commit himself to an expansive and illuminating discussion of the place to which he has led me. Maybe I should be smarter, and not require his reflections to help me shape my thoughts. Or maybe he wants me to sharpen my own thinking the way I would in an ideal museum.

In one uncommonly opinionated and welcome paragraph, Buruma permits himself to hold forth on such a museum, one in which objects are arranged according to ideas so that many stories may be evoked, one in which "conflict, debate, interpretation, reinterpretation—in short, a discourse without end" may arise. Maybe Buruma wants simply to set me free within the pages of his book so that I can draw my own conclusions, the way I would in such a museum. A laudable impulse, I admit, but also a trick that I can recognize, since I *am* smart enough to grasp that a

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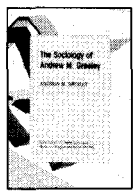

Andrew M. Greeley

This work collects 48 essays by Andrew Greeley on the Sociology of Religion. Published over a thirty year period (1962-1992), the essays reflect a wide range of interests and questions. Nevertheless, the essays are unified by a propensity to subject questions of religion and behavior to empirical test and quantitative data. The occurrence of hallucinations and the paranormal, attitudes towards racial integration and AIDS policy, and the sociology of American Catholics are but a few of the questions examined in these studies. Beyond being a remarkable record of Greeley's on-going work in the sociology of religion, the essays also serve, as noted in Michael Hout's introduction, to chronicle "how (the) sociology of religion has moved from the margins of sociology (back) into the core of the discipline...."

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reader's only way to the "objects" in a book-museum is through the author's own words.

Or maybe Buruma assumes that almost any intelligent reader should think as he does, should, automatically and without much reflection, adopt his own brand of rationalism based on a belief in constitutional patriotism, a mistrust of "simple religious impulse," an ability for peoples of different backgrounds to reach similar conclusions, and a conviction that political arrangements can alter "mentality." Naturally, many of us would want to share at least some of this clear thinking. (Believe me, I read closely to glean these few markers of Buruma's belief system.)

Maybe, maybe, maybe. The problem is: I shouldn't be spending my time trying to comprehend Ian Buruma, I should be spending my time trying to comprehend war. And I believe that someone like Buruma can help me, although I suspect that he and I differ in some fundamental ways.

I think that I believe in the power of culture in a way that he does not. When, for instance, he visits the "Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots," near Shire on the southern tip of Kiths, Buruma is, as many Westerners would be, shocked and angered (my word, not his). He is dismayed by the "phony ideals" and "cloying sentimentality" that sent young men to self-immolation. And he comments with some surprise that, even today, the keepers of this peace museum seem to miss the point that these young men were exploited, that they participated in "an utter waste of life."

Perhaps many of us would react in like manner, but when we do, we miss the point, because one cannot excise Kamikaze death from a culture in which suicide has a deep, rich history bound to honor and right action. Military propaganda may have heightened the fervor of participation; yet the cultural mechanism not only to justify suicide, but also to celebrate it, has been firmly in place for centuries in Japan. I think that to underestimate the power of culture, to allow a political overlay to obscure ancient ways of knowing and describing the world is not simply discourteous; it is dangerous.

In the same way, Buruma seems to underestimate the urgent, compelling power of religious belief. To view this power only from a secular point of view tends to reduce religion or spiritual expression to a partisan impulse, mandated either by the temporal leaders of an external "church," or by the implanted "conscience." The problem with this simple political explanation is that it allows people who do not experience religious zeal to remain ignorant of the might that such zeal can wield. People who converse with God or with Higher Beings are capable of acts of incalculable goodness as well as those that promote horror.

To pretend that we live in a world in which the deep elaborations of culture and the calling of spirit do not determine the life course of millions is to begin to forget our capacity for compassion. Buruma in his openness, decency, inclusiveness, and intelligence represents many of us who inhabit a new "world" culture, dependent on technologies over which we have little control; we speak various languages, and read in order to expand our awareness, we pass in and out of each other's countries, and aim for at least some mutual understanding. We believe that if we amass enough evidence, we can get at some truth that will make life better for everyone. We are more or less religious, more or less aware of culture at work.

And we live in a world in which war is endemic, if not always eruptive. Buruma's book did free me to contemplate the meaning of this low-grade ongoing war which smolders as racism, as hatred of difference, which seems to be with us "for good." As long as we watch one another carefully and account for ourselves, I believe we stand a chance of continuing with decency. But through Auschwitz and Hiroshima we have come to know that the old-fashioned "gentlemen's agreement" war, one which closes borders and mandates secrecy, has no place in a world whose technologies can slaughter millions with mindless efficiency. I agree with Buruma; there are no "dangerous peoples," but there are "dangerous situations." We must learn to avoid them if we intend to survive. Which is one reason that Buruma's book, though inadequate in some ways, is seriously important; it bears witness to that intention. □

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GOD AS TOP QUARK?

I want to try to show that although faith goes beyond what is logically demonstrable—and what worthwhile view of reality does not?—yet it is capable of rational motivation. Christians do not have to close their minds, nor are they faced with the dilemma of having to choose between ancient faith and modern knowledge.

—John Polkinghorne
The Faith of a Physicist

THE FAITH OF A PHYSICIST
Reflections of a Bottom-up Thinker
John Polkinghorne
Princeton University Press, $24.95, 205 pp.

NATURE, REALITY, AND THE SACRED
The Nexus of Science and Religion
Langdon Gilkey
Fortress Press, $18, 266 pp.

Chet Raymo

There is a kind of "God-shaped hole in many people's lives," says John Polkinghorne. And he's right, at least about there being a hole in our lives. As we approach the end of the scientific century, many educated people in the Western world long wistfully for something akin to traditional religious faith. As Polkinghorne says, they can neither accept the idea of God nor quite leave it alone. This longing is evidenced by an avalanche of books by scientists interested in matters theological, and by theologians interested in science. These books tumble prodigiously into that hole in our lives, with no sign of filling it. Evidently, the hole is deep and capacious. The shape of the hole is at issue, and to call it "God-shaped" begs the question, for the affliction of our times is that we have no satisfactory image of God that rests comfortably with what scientists have learned about the creation.

These two fine books move heaven and earth to replenish our longing for spiritual wholeness. Langdon Gilkey is emeritus professor of theology at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He confesses himself a scientific outsider, but is fully informed about contemporary scientific theories. John Polkinghorne is a former professor of mathematical physics at Queen's College, Cambridge, and an ordained priest of the Church of England. He is a scientific insider, and no slouch at theology. Gilkey has written extensively on issues of science and religion; his writings constitute a scholarly counterpart of our culture's quest for spiritual and intellectual wholeness. *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred* is probably not his last word on the subject, but that is its strength: Gilkey's humility in the face of large issues is reassuring. Science is our most dependable and accurate way of knowing the world, says Gilkey; indeed, it is the astonishing success of science that creates the present dilemma. But science is not our only way of knowing, and a large part of Gilkey's agenda—rightly so, this scientist reviewer believes—is to put science in its place.

Both science and religious ways of knowing have surrendered some of their past pretensions to intellectual supremacy and objectivity, says Gilkey. Both disciplines use symbols and analogies to describe their subjects (God and nature respectively); in both disciplines the knower plays an essential role in the knowing process; and both theology and science depend upon each other for their completion.

This last claim is perhaps the most controversial, and it is here that Gilkey is at his best. He demonstrates convincingly that science draws its necessary presuppositions from a broader cultural context that includes religious perceptions about the power, life, order, and redemptive unity of nature.

These religious perceptions are most

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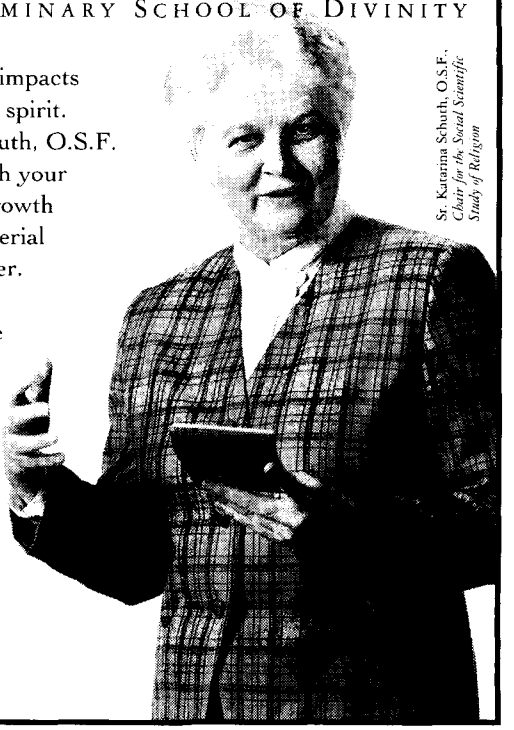

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vividly experienced in archaic religions, argues Gilkey, and it is here that his image of God begins to collapse into a vague, even pantheistic, notion of cosmic mystery. Such a notion will satisfy many contemporary scientists and intellectuals, but it is a tottery foundation for Christian faith. For example, Gilkey admits that in our present scientific understanding there are no spirits without bodily organisms, no minds without brains, but he does not face the thorny issue of what this means for the essential Christian notions of resurrection and eternal life, or the personhood of God. At the end, he writes: "God is, therefore, the name for that unlimited reality spanning the entire ordered past and the entire open future, uniting into an ongoing order achieved actuality, on the one hand, with the open possibility of the novel future, on the other; uniting destiny from the past with freedom in and for the future." There is nothing wrong with this sentence, except that it provides little hope for the continued vitality of traditional faiths. Further, it is the kind of flabby language that will evoke groans from scientists, who will prefer a more graspable referent for the word "God."

John Polkinghorne has a more ambitious agenda: To discover if "the strange and exciting claims of orthodox Christianity are tenable in a scientific age." He takes as his chapter subtitle phrases from the Nicene Creed, and doesn't flinch from "On the third day he rose again," or even "We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

These chapters were originally presented as the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh for 1993-94. Lord Gifford's establishing bequest specified that the topic of the lectures be natural theology, "without reference to or reliance upon any special exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation." It is in this sense that Polkinghorne calls himself a bottom-up thinker, moving from the scientific perception of nature to the loftier themes of faith.

> *I have found [cosmologists] Heinz Pagels, Carl Sagan, Steven Weinberg, Richard Dawkins, and John Barrow and Frank Tipler learned, intelligent, enthralling, and surprisingly charming. They appear (to the layperson) to know exactly what they are talking about—even if much of it remains incomprehensible to me....What I did find, however, is that none of these cosmologists seems to be conscious of the important epistemological and metaphysical problems that inevitably hover in the background of their work.*
>
> —Langdon Gilkey
> *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred*

Like Gilkey, he rejects the "lunar landscape" of reductionist science. Several times, for example, he draws attention to "the immense gap between neural activity and perceiving a patch of pink," thereby supposedly carving out a place for something akin to soul or spirit. It is not clear to this reviewer that the gap is as immense as Polkinghorne says; Apple's new Personal Digital Assistant (called Newton) does a fairly adequate job converting my handwritten scrawl (more subtle than a patch of pink) into computer commands, and the chips in this machine are not remotely as complex as the neural webs in my brain.

However, on the whole, Polkinghorne steers a marvelously adept course between the Scylla of top-down theology and the Charybdis of naive scientism. To fit the God of Moses and Jesus into the hole in our lives, he rounds off some projecting corners (for example, he says that God is rightly called Father, but not in the narrowly masculine or patriarchal sense). More to the point, he nudges and tugs at the envelope of the hole to encompass the God of the Creed.

The central chapter of Polkinghorne's book is "Crucifixion and Resurrection," as these are the pivots upon which Christian faith turns. As a professed "bottom-up thinker," he looks at matters of historical evidence, admittedly sketchy and unreliable by scientific criteria, even sometimes contradictory. "It seems to me entirely possible that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, we would never have heard of him," says Polkinghorne. Well, yes, but to many contemporary intellectuals this will sound suspiciously like top-down thinking.

Polkinghorne admits that "how we actually weigh that evidence will be influenced by the extent to which we can make sense of the notion of the Resurrection of Jesus within our general world view," and this is certainly true. This is why, for example, the scientific community was (and remains) skeptical of the evidence for cold fusion; it simply does not mesh with the rest of what we have learned about nature. Alas, the bottom-up evidence for the Virgin Birth is weaker than for cold fusion.

Thus the yawning chasm between science and religion remains. Polkinghorne's is the bolder agenda, and for this reviewer results in the more engaging of the two books. However, both books are patch jobs, plastering over the hole in our lives. What is required is a yet bolder fusion of scientific knowing and religious apprehension of the divine. It remains to be seen if this can be accomplished without jettisoning the Nicene Creed. □

"The amino acid part is boring, but it gets more exciting later on."

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STORIES THAT ARE POEMS

COLLECTED STORIES
Grace Paley
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $27.50, 386 pp.

Bethe Dufresne

Grace Paley tells us in the introduction to this short-story collection that she grew up reading and writing poetry, but somewhere in the mid-1950s she found that the form no longer suited her. A simple switch to straightforward prose did not provide the solution. The stories she wanted to tell—needed to tell—about men and women required some further invention. So Paley (although she does not tell us this) discovered her true voice, the voice of a poet, and fleshed out her poems into full-bodied scenes.

Full-bodied is perhaps the operative word here, because while Paley's stories often read more like poems or even one-act plays, they are distinctly composed of flesh and blood.

The most vital of her characters, the one who keeps raising her voice again and again, is a woman named Faith. I think of her as Paley's voice, if not necessarily the embodiment of her actual experience. Never, perhaps, has a writer's alter ego been so aptly named.

"I myself, although I lost God a long time ago, have never lost faith," she says in one of "Two Short Sad Stories from a Long and Happy Life," the one that begins cryptically, "There were two husbands disappointed by eggs," but tells us all we need to know about the man who made two sons and the man who raised them. How they wound up together in Faith's kitchen one day is not nearly as important as how they leave it. "Goodbye, I said, have a nice day. Goodbye, they said once more, and set off in pride on paths which are not my concern."

Faith doesn't preach.

Because Faith is absent from many of the stories, we don't have the opportunity to tire of her. In any event, she is never tiresome, even when her children wear her out. An early story, when Faith's boys are young and she cannot detach one of them from her long enough to think, ends soaringly with her cradling the boy in her arms. "Then through the short fat fingers of my son, interred forever, like a black-and-white-barred king in Alcatraz, my heart lit up in stripes."

A later story, "The Long-Distance Runner," begins with indifferent sons, old enough for parting from their mother, an indifferent boyfriend, and Faith's run for life through the streets of New York into the neighborhood of her own childhood. There she becomes a quasi-prisoner in what was once her home, where Russian-Yiddish accents have been replaced by black voices putting her in her place, and where she is both trapped and enthralled by fear, discovery, and longing.

Paley's stories are best described as revelations. The publication of these forty-five stories of faith, resilience, and charity will no doubt entice more readers to discover what has for years delighted Paley fans, but the uninitiated should be forewarned—especially if they aren't poetry lovers—that this is not a volume to devour quickly.

As a newcomer to her work, I was frequently stopped in my tracks by a perfect phrase or image. The down side is that you can easily get so caught up in the language that you lose your grip on the story line. Great poetry (and these stories are great poetry) arrests us that way, which is why poems are typically brief. Paley's careful, intricate craftsmanship is brilliant in small doses but can get a little contrived and muddled in some of her longer stories. It may be necessary for complete comprehension to read them over and over again, but poetry was always meant to be lingered over. Paley does not move the reader along with a great narrative swell, yet when

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she's humming it's amazing how much vitality she can squeeze into a character in such a small space, and how she makes us care so deeply about people we barely know.

Take the very short story "Samuel," about a boy who wasn't afraid of anything, who hopped a ride on the platform between locked subway cars and fell to his death when a man "whose boyhood had been more watchful than brave" became angry and pulled the emergency cord. Paley reveals the tragedy of this death in the most unexpected way, by holding out hope, and then withdrawing it. The hope rests with Samuel's mother, a young woman who quickly becomes pregnant again.

"The child born to her was a boy. They brought him to be seen and nursed. She smiled. But immediately she saw that this baby wasn't Samuel. She and her husband together have had other children, but never again will a boy exactly like Samuel be known."

Such simple eloquence is Paley at her best.

Although many of Paley's stories are what the theater calls kitchen dramas, the author (who is well-known for her social and political activism) has the brashness and confidence to reach far out into the world. Sometimes, it's only a short reach out the window to remind an angry young father walking by with his daughter about the precarious position of the human race, as she does in "Anxiety." Here Paley may be describing her essential self:

> I move the pots of marigolds aside. Then I'm able to lean on my elbow way out into unshadowed visibility. Once, not too long ago, the tenements were speckled with women like me in every third window up to the fifth story, calling the children from play to receive orders and instruction. This memory enables me to say strictly, Young man, I am an older person who feels free because of that to ask questions and give advice.

Other times, as in "Somewhere Else," Paley chronicles a long reach such as the one she made when she traveled with an American delegation to the People's Republic of China.

Although Paley's voice is a little heavier with experience in the later stories, it never loses the boldness of Shirley, the little Jewish girl in the early story, "The Loudest Voice," who disturbs the peace at home when she lands a starring role in the neighborhood Christmas pageant. The night after the big day, Shirley goes to sleep with a clear conscience after shushing the voices of her proud parents in the next room. "I expected to be heard. My voice was certainly the loudest," Paley writes.

There is no self-congratulation in those words, only the self-assurance that has kept Paley's voice so true throughout the years. □

SECULARISM UNDER SIEGE

THE REVENGE OF GOD
The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World
Gilles Kepel
The Pennsylvania State University Press, $14.95, 215 pp.

Michael J. Hunt

The futile superficiality of dissecting contemporary religious movements along the lines of "left wing" and "right wing," terms largely borrowed from American political reporting, may not survive the publication of the French best seller, *La Revanche de Dieu*. Gilles Kepel, a renowned French scholar of contemporary Islam, reminds us that by 1980, in the very land where the inexorable progress of the Enlightenment and secularism had seemed most secure, all three candidates for the American presidency, though separated by profound political differences, were publicly professing their allegiance to Evangelical Christianity. Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and John Anderson would not have employed Kepel's exact language but all three were attempting to tap into the massive popular discontent with certain aspects of secularism and the Enlightenment legacy. Though it was little noticed at the time and is still barely comprehended today, Kepel masterfully documents how this discontent with the values and ideology of secularism, far from confined to American culture, was rampant among peoples in lands as disparate as Egypt, Algeria, Italy, and the Jewish populations of the occupied territories.

Two years before the 1980 American election, Karol Wojtyla, the archbishop of Krakow, had been elected to the papacy. A year after the campaign, Anwar Sadat would be assassinated by Islamic radicals bent on the restoration of Islam in a secularized Egypt. Major credit for the victory of Ronald Reagan in 1980 would be assigned to the emergence of evangelical Christians as a political force in the United States. By 1980, Israel's Likud government was utilizing strongly biblical arguments for its claim over the occupied territories as part of the historical Land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*).

Kepel persuasively demonstrates that, by the end of the '70s, major elements in all three of the monotheistic religions, concurrently but not in concert, recognized the spent force of secularism as a compelling worldview. Plumbing the depths of their own scriptural traditions, dissenting groups set out to create new societies that would reflect their religious visions. In Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Catholic church played a significant role in the demise of communism. But, Kepel reminds us, it was a revived Islam, in Egypt and elsewhere, that first drove back the ideology of Marxism. Using a resurgent Islam as a prism for viewing religion in the modern world, Kepel argues that for Westerners "A detour via the experience of something culturally far removed from us has the advantage of overturning mental laziness and illusion of familiarity...." This view

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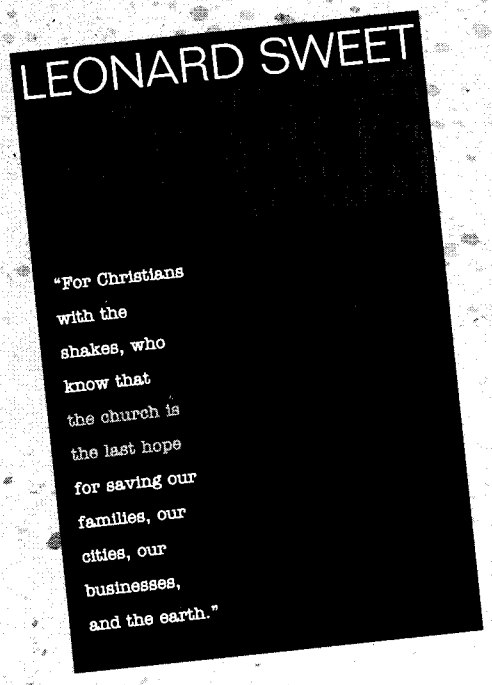
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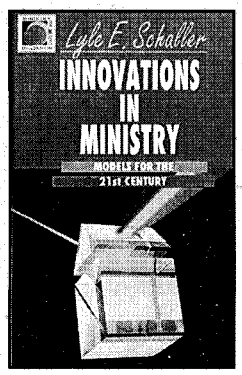

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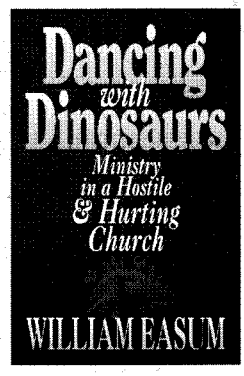

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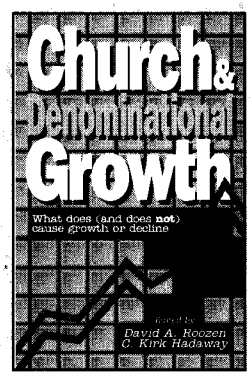

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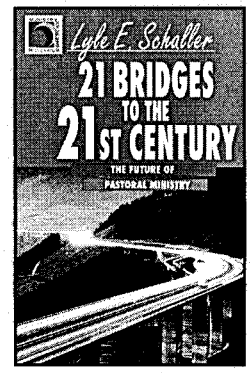

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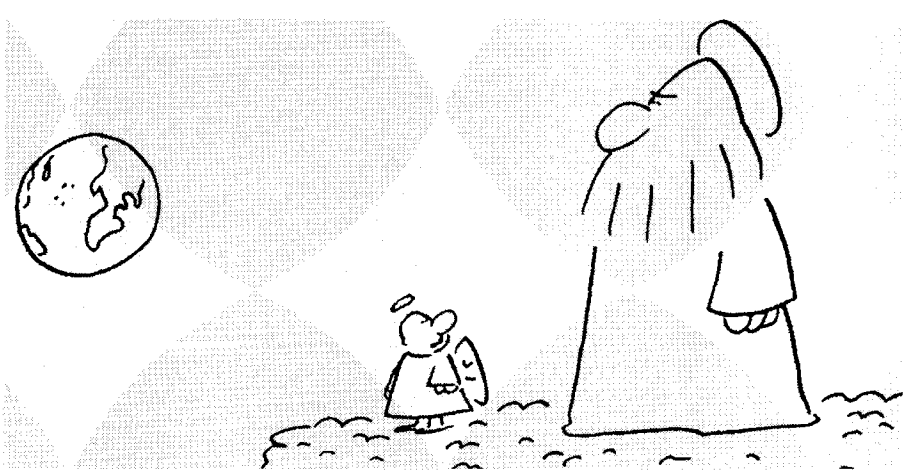
of ourselves from another culture will at first seem congenial to academic proponents of multiculturalism and foes of Western hegemony. Most, however, will not want to follow Kepel very far in his assertions about the resurgence of religion or the bankruptcy of secularism. Yet it is on these two points that Kepel builds his most startling and provocative claims, calling into question our basic assumptions about religion and modernity.

Beginning in the last century, a tide of modernization began to influence the three Abrahamic religions. Each sought an accommodation with the ongoing process of secularization. But around 1975, Kepel maintains, "this whole process went into reverse." The emergence of new religious leaders in the late 1970s, including the election of Karol Wojtyla in 1978, came at a time of widespread confusion and dissatisfaction with the results of the Enlightenment. New leaders along with new religious movements "aimed no longer at adapting to secular values but at recovering a sacred foundation for the organization of society—by changing society if necessary....The theme was no longer *aggiornamento* but a 'second evangelization of Europe'; the aim was no longer to modernize Islam but to 'Islamisize modernity.'"

The break with the Enlightenment occurred in very distinct and usually unrelated ways in the three Abrahamic traditions. Still, Kepel discovers two substantial affinities in all three. First, unlike many religious revivals of the past, these new movements are most successful in attracting the allegiance of very well educated and technologically proficient young people. The Islamic revival, Catholic movements like Communion and Liberation, the evangelical awakening among American Protestants, and the upsurge of Orthodox Judaism have had their greatest success among younger people. These young people reject the overall results of modernity yet use modern technological methods in the cause of religious renewal.

How do these technologically advanced believers remain so unaffected by modernity? How do they finesse their immersion in the seemingly antagonistic worlds of secular technology and religious faith? What do young American evangelists and young Islamic activists really have in common? Unfortunately, Kepel does not adequately grapple with these contradictions.

Second, in America and Europe, these religious movements have retreated from public engagement and regrouped after a series of failures to secure popular electoral majorities for their programs. In the United States, Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority has withdrawn from explicit political activity. In Europe, similar Catholic political efforts failed in the electoral politics of Italy and Poland. In Israel, the religious parties have succeeded only in attaining some legislative veto power. And in Islamic societies, the absence of democracy or of a tradition of separation between "church" and state led Islamic activists to oppose the incursion of modern, Western influences. Only Iran offers an example of some success, but obviously at a very high cost. In all three traditions, there has been a subsequent embrace of what Kepel describes as a strategy "from below," seeking to establish a religious underpinning for the whole society by focusing attention on the more immediate, local, and personal experiences of people. Thus in the U.S. the battleground for religious activists has shifted largely from the national scene to local school boards, abortion clinics, and family life.



"They're really not bad enough to destroy. How about just a near miss by a comet?"

Although Catholicism and the papacy of John Paul II are not the exclusive focus of his work, Kepel offers John Paul as a premier example of a religious leader who intuitively understands the bankruptcy of secularism, not only in his native Eastern Europe but even more importantly in the dominant Western cultures. According to Kepel, John Paul, who as a young Polish bishop participated in the Second Vatican Council, understands the council as the vehicle for retrieving the sources of Christian revelation as the basis for reforming society. Similarly, Cardinals Joseph Ratzinger and Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris both view the twentieth-century horrors of Hitler and Stalin as the natural outgrowth of the Enlightenment project of enthroning a mechanistic rationalism in the place of God and religious absolutes.

Certainly it is true that John Paul, Ratzinger, and Lustiger have formulated bold critiques of the Enlightenment. Yet all three also speak well of religious liberty, societal pluralism, and democracy. Kepel is finally not persuasive that John Paul's views represent a complete break with the Enlightenment tradition. Contemporary Catholicism's complicated and nuanced relationship with the modern world is, I would suggest, more adequately explained by sociologist Peter Berger's model of "cognitive bargaining." Nonetheless, Kepel's fundamental argument that current Catholic leaders are not enthralled by the Enlightenment legacy is doubtless true and also helps to explain the hostility the church often encounters among secular elites.

The Revenge of God will induce horror among those who are determined to relegate all religion to a purely private and innocuous realm. For those Christians, Jews, and Moslems who understand religion as having a public and societal relevance, Kepel's work will provoke a profound rethinking of many common assumptions about religion and society. □

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A VERY ODD COUPLE

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE PROVOCATEUR
The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky
Edited by Bérnard Doering
University of Notre Dame Press,
$25.95, 118 pp.

William A. Simpson

Le *gentile* Jacques Maritain was a passionate man. From his youth he was a militant socialist, but was embarrassed to bring leftist friends home to see his family's bourgeois comforts and habits. He and his future wife Raïssa fell in love while organizing a committee to defend Russian students jailed by the czar, and agreed that if they couldn't find the meaning of life by year's end, they would commit suicide together. Instead of life's meaning, their next big discovery was Henri Bergson, a *divertissement* sufficient to deter them from their death pact. Then after their marriage they took Benedictine oblate vows that included celibacy for the rest of their lives.

About philosophy, Maritain wrote, "But this [Cartesian anthropocentric] optimism is, if I may say so, committed to suicide; for it presupposes a rupture with being" (*Dream of Descartes*). And about worship he wrote, "But this false perspective [of communal naturalism, for example, group sensitivity discussion] extends the human social claims outside their own order, to impose them on a domain not their own where they devour everything....Against this pseudo-liturgical state of mind, it behooves one to defend the rights and dignity of silence....Against this pseudo-liturgical exaggeration, it behooves one to defend the liberty of souls....Against this pseudo-liturgy it behooves one to defend the liturgy" (*Liturgy and Contemplation*).

Saul Alinsky was the Mercutio of democratic politics, overequipped with the performing arts of the local meeting hall, such as sarcasm, bombast, bravado, Socratic ridicule, and the knock-out wisecrack. During the battle between the people's organization FIGHT and the Eastman Kodak corporation in Rochester, Alinksy observed, "When I get through with Eastman Kodak, there won't be enough toilet paper in the world to wipe them clean" (*Let Them Call Me Rebel*). While lecturing to a large poor people's organization in Manila, the question came up how to deal with the armed guards who forced the poor to stay off the development property on which they had political claim. "Do we shoot them? How can we get around them?" Alinsky had spotted a young woman in the front row wearing red hot-pants, and asked her to come up to the lectern where they chatted briefly. As the snickering and guffawing died down, he added, "What would happen next Sunday if Mrs. D__ and her friends, similarly dressed, took some hot coffee to those guards?" (*The Radical Vision*).

And in 1958-60, a good many Protestants in Chicago, led by Walter Kloetzli of the Lutheran church and Harold E. Fey of the *Christian Century*, were condemning the Catholic archdiocese for hiding behind unchristian political conflict to protect white ethnic parishes from black neighborhoods. The archdiocese, through a well-connected law firm, had persuaded station WGN, owned by the *Tribune*, to suspend the TV broadcast of a film about Martin Luther. Nicholas von Hoffman, an Alinsky cohort, convinced him that this was a grossly stupid tactic, and Alinsky proceeded to hector, cajole, and badger the chancellor, Monsignor Edward Burke, to rescind the ban. At a lunch, Burke told Alinsky to stay out of it, this was not his fight. "It's strictly between us and the goddamn Protestants." They argued heatedly, and Alinsky's final pitch was to let the movie be broadcast, "with one proviso, that they show it backward so that Martin

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Luther will end up as a Catholic." Everybody at the table exploded in laughter, except Burke, who finally said, "You son of a bitch, Saul." The archdiocese withdrew its opposition to the movie.

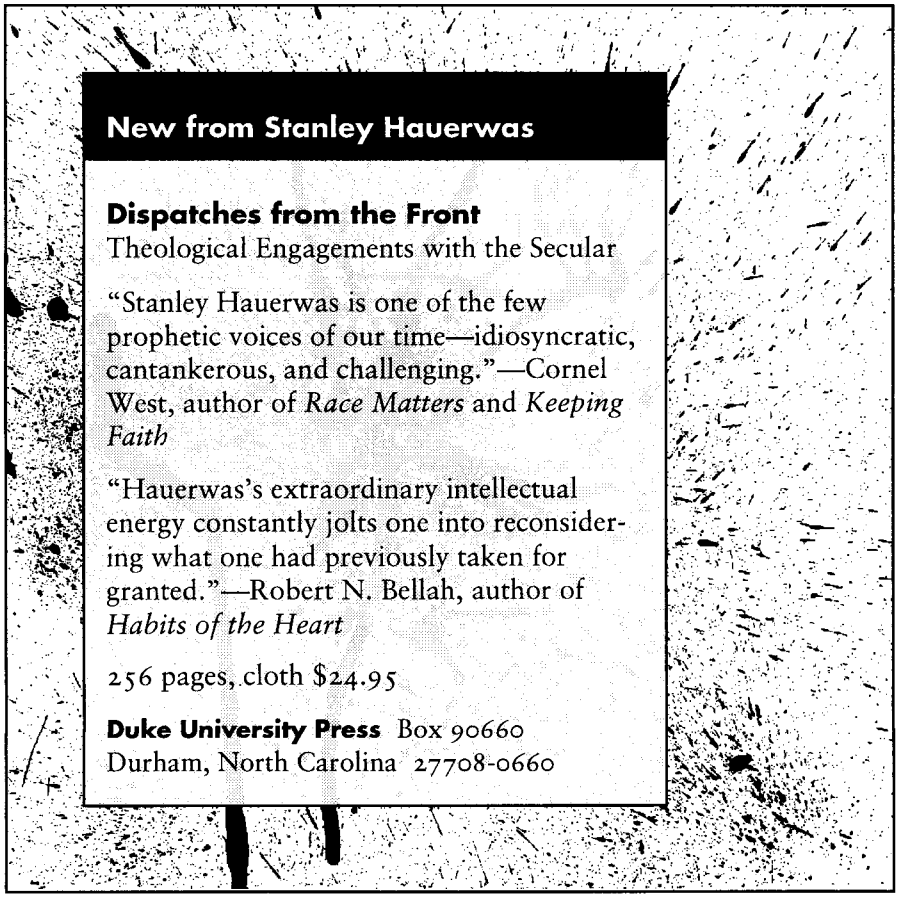
Maritain and Alinsky met when Maritain fled France during the Second World War for exile in the United States, and lectured at Hunter College by invitation of its president, George Shuster, once an editor of *Commonweal*, later chairman of Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation board. Maritain refers to his friendship with Alinsky a number of times in his published writings. But these letters present a surprising and rich encounter with the depth of their trust and the fervor of their love and mutual respect. That only nineteen of the seventy-four letters are from Maritain surely means, not that he wrote less often, but that Alinsky's organizing motto, "Low Overhead, High Independence," excluded filing cabinets for saving documents. His administrative equipment seemed limited to his suitcase, a telephone, and his room-dominating ego.

The letters reveal a Saul Alinsky crushed by the accidental death of his first wife. The French philosopher's letter of counsel included this sentence: "In your dire solitude and agony the force of God will work in you, never has your vocation been purer, your rude task of love more necessary, your pity for men more fecund." And Alinsky's reply begins, "Jacques dear: I wept over your letter."

And they reveal Saul Alinsky as the Jewish mother, nudging, fussing, ladling out advice to the Maritains during their move to Princeton and the Institute for Advanced Study. They show that both men made elaborate, complex, theological and emotional arguments with themselves about facing the ebb-tide of their careers and death. Eager to seek the other's approval, each carefully explained his own insights and conclusions: "...as you [Jacques] know I have never been convinced of the evidence (of eternal life) and am still searching." The two are equals, like a matched pair of opposites in a lifelong seminar on the meaning of politics. But they are also religious communicants who seek and often find pastoral affirmation in the other's presence and judgment.

The importance of Jacques Maritain continues in many areas, certainly in his critical appreciation of esthetics, certainly in his articulation of the mutual dependence between metaphysics and political ethics. That he reargues Thomistic principles is perhaps less significant than his intellectual method, which is everywhere to elaborate a kind of symphonic dialectic that resonates with many listeners who search and hope. His letters to the quintessential American secular activist strike the same notes.

The importance of Saul Alinsky, for metropolitan-urban communities and for religious people active in politics, is barely beginning to be reclaimed. It has suffered from a generation of fog that descended from the hyperactive fate of the Old Left and the amnesia of the New Left. Alinsky's organizing depended on religious communities and on the confidence of theologically informed clergy and teachers. He never tried to substitute or subvert those symbol-driven institutions with his own pragmatic instruments and energies of democratic power. His letters clearly exemplify this independent reciprocity between religion and politics. So also do a large number of regional organizations that came to life through his teaching and example. This volume reminds us of how vital the connection between religion and politics can be. □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EVERYBODY MUST HELP THEM

I DREAM OF PEACE
Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia
Preface by Maurice Sendak; drawings collected by UNICEF
HarperCollins, $12.95, 76 pp.

Peggy Ellsberg

When *I Dream of Peace* arrived by mail yesterday, my seven-year-old son studied the cover. "These airplanes bombed a hospital!" he noticed. "And the hospital is on fire! Isn't that against the law?" Despite the values and opinions we constantly espouse, our son is a genteel connoisseur of GI Joe dolls and of the *Eyewitness Dictionaries* of *Military Uniforms* and *Military History*. He knows what is and is not allowed under the rules of war. But it has always seemed to me, who progressed right from Tiny Tears dolls to objecting to the Vietnam War, that everything about armed aggression ought to be illegal. War and its practices always struck me as a simple series of incomprehensible atrocities and monumental lunacy.

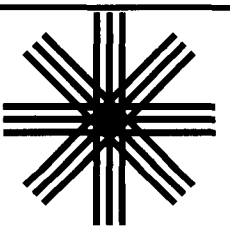
The drawings and writings in this beautifully produced volume document the particularly incomprehensible atrocities that are being inflicted, as a special military strategy, against the children of former Yugoslavia. The little poems and captions written by child survivors are almost unbearably sad: "The day they killed my house"; "Many people are wounded—sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers"; "I used to have a new tricycle, red and yellow with a bell"; "We had to climb over dead bodies..."; and a caption under a drawing of a small figure following a larger figure rushing from a burning house, with a bomb about to fall on their sandbox and swingset: "Mama, wait for me!"

But the drawings surprised me with their power. Produced by children aged six to fourteen, they are immediately recognizable as the blunt, simple representations of very young artists. Almost every drawing is dominated by the color red: fire and blood rule the design of war. Tiny human figures surrounded by blossoms of blood and halos of flame are scattered against the flat, illogical, totalitarian landscape of terror and chaos.

Less expected than the primitive realities that a child's crayons can produce, however, is the emotional subtlety and precision of detail that most of these drawings reveal. In eleven-year-old Ankica's watercolor titled "Mother and Child," produced with zen-like economy and a few bold brushstrokes, the tiny infant's face, outlined in blood, is a profound study in pain and fear; the maternal face, a mere stick-figure's simple face, is washed with blue-green tears, her mouth a wide scream, her eyes huge with shock. In ten-year-old Belma's "We Were Only Waiting for Candles," three children lie in floating perspective, limbs flying from their bodies, fire and blood surrounding them like scarlet cotton. It is striking in this picture how obvious it is that two of the children are still alive—and crying—but that one is already dead, her face reduced to a featureless blood stain.

These drawings result from the art therapy sessions conducted by UNICEF in an effort to address the children's traumas. The book also contains a few pages of black-and-white photographs of the affected children, which are as moving as the drawings.

I have chosen not to see the movie *Schindler's List*, partly because at this moment in my life I do not want to flood myself with painful images that I can do nothing to heal. And I was a bit anxious before opening *I Dream of Peace* that it would leave me feeling torn and hopeless. But it did not. The child-artists themselves continue to be filled with hope; they are already forgiving the future, filling each poem and picture with yearning for a better time. After my son studied every drawing and read every word of the book, he was sober and quiet. "What do you think the book means?" I asked him. "It means that someone—or everyone—absolutely must help them," he said. □



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Legends for their times

Lawrence S. Cunningham

The relationship of Christian belief to the classical tradition of Greece and Rome has been the subject of intense scholarly interest since at least the time of Adolf Von Harnack. Scholars of the stature of Arthur Darby Nock and Norris Cochrane studied this problem in order to clarify this basic issue: Did classical culture somehow cloud the purity of the gospel or was it a vehicle for the clarification of the gospel message?

In his Gifford Lectures, Pelikan again takes up this question (the very title of his book pays tribute to Cochrane's earlier work) in a manner which can only be described as magisterial. Pelikan's book has a very precise focus. He examines in close detail the fourth-century Greek Christian writers known as the Cappadocians with this question in mind: How did these writers, steeped in classical culture, use the "natural theology" of the Greek tradition in their explication of the faith and to what degree did they critique that culture in the light of the gospel?

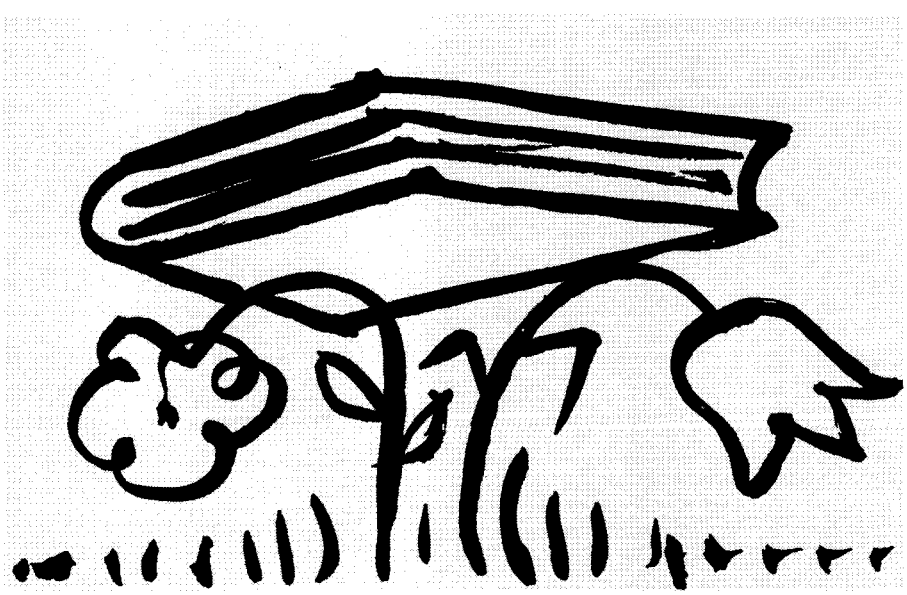
Christianity and Classical Culture, *by Jaroslav Pelikan, Yale University Press, $40, 368 pp.*

It is almost impossible, in the limited space of these notes, to do justice to the careful, enlightening, and precise way Pelikan answers his twin questions. His basic thesis is that all of the Cappadocians find Nicene orthodoxy congruent with the presuppositions of classical "natural theology." Indeed, they use much of it as a foundational presupposition and have no hesitations in showing how this theology becomes enriched, corrected, and enlarged by the revelation of God in Christ. Thus, to cite one specific example, classical philology and the classical rules of hermeneutics aided in the interpretation of Scripture, but the metamorphosis of the text into an encounter with the Word of God came only through grace-impelled contemplation using the eyes of faith. More generally, classical culture provided a vocabulary, a metaphysics, a view of nature and humanity, etc., as a matrix for a deeper understanding of revelation.

This book has a number of conspicuous merits. First, Pelikan has that deep learning which makes it possible for him to read the two Gregories, Basil and Macrina, with limpid intelligence against the background of Greek thought. Second, as the acknowledged contemporary master of the history of Christian theology, he can prod the reader forward to see how these fourth-century writers set the agenda for subsequent theological reflection; this is not an antiquarian enterprise. Finally, his basic thesis, stated economically in the subtitle of the book ("The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism") is convincing as he shows just how far and with what care the axial figures of fourth-century Greek theology did and did not use the intellectual culture that was their inheritance. "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Quite a bit but not too much, is the answer.

Finally, let me praise Yale's press for turning out such a handsome and "reader friendly" volume. Employing a setup Pelikan used in his estimable five-volume history of the Christian tradition, the notes run down the left side of the page in a generous margin that leaves plenty of room for doodling. Since Pelikan frequently cites both the primary sources and secondary literature, it is an immense help not to have to look back to those wretched endnotes that so frequently appear even in scholarly books. The volume ends with a glossary of technical terms, a bibliography, and indices of biblical, patristic, and general citations. Well done, well done!

Jacobus de Voragine (?1230-92) entered the Dominicans as a young man and later became archbishop of Genoa. Posterity best remembers him for a vast compilation of the lives of the saints which he wrote around 1260. It was one of the most pop-



LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is professor of theology and chair of the department at the University of Notre Dame.*

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ular books written in the Middle Ages as the over one thousand surviving manuscripts attest. It was translated into English, with additional material added by the printer-editor William Caxton in the late fifteenth century; there has been no other full translation into English until Ryan completed his task which he started two generations ago.

Jacobus de Voragine: The Golden Legend (2 volumes), *translated by William Granger Ryan, Princeton University Press, $49.50, 391 pp.*

Why should anyone want to read the *Golden Legend* today? Apart from the sheer charm of the stories (along with a whole panoply of miracles that even Jacobus had trouble narrating with a straight face), there is a simple scholarly answer to the question: The *Legenda Aurea* was an encyclopedic sourcebook which subsequent authors and artists drew upon for inspiration and iconographical details as they chronicled/depicted the lives of the saints. Much of the standard symbolism that we find today, for example, in the stained glass windows of our churches, comes to us mediated through a long tradition that flows from the compilation made by Jacobus in the thirteenth century. With fewer students of literature and art history studying Latin, one foresees that these two volumes will be constantly used in reference libraries. For that reason alone, we are grateful to the translator and to Princeton University Press for making these books available.

Jacobus divides his work according to the liturgical calendar (i.e., he begins with the Advent season) and utilizes a catalogue of saints that would have been commemorated during the celebration of the sanctoral cycle. This is not a book, I suspect, that will be read through (at least, I was not tempted to do so), but it is a browser's paradise. I much enjoyed Jacobus's extravagantly wrongheaded etymologies of names, his earnest detailing of miracles, the oddball stories of mistaken sexual identities (the monk Theodore who was, in fact, Theodora), saintly wrestling matches with demons, long excursions that give background to familiar iconographical themes (Catherine's wheel; Barbara's tower), and frustrated executioners who stab, burn, strike, and boil without effect. Since Jacobus also comments on feasts in the temporal cycle, it is interesting to read how he fleshes out details of the Nativity story (e.g., about the Magi) or the Passion (e.g., on the final fate of Pilate) which he draws from chronicles available to him at the time.

Given the cost of these volumes (perhaps a more affordable paperback version is to come; it would be desirable), few, beyond professionals, will be tempted to purchase the set. Nonetheless, these books belong in any decent reference library that pretends to comprehensiveness in cultural history in general and church history in particular.

There is nothing "hagiographical" about the life of a modern Carmelite nun whose letters have just been published. Her life cuts too close to the horrific side of human experience. Edith Stein (1891-1942), a student of Edmund Husserl, left a promising career as a philosopher to become a Catholic. After teaching in Catholic schools and pedagogical institutes, she entered the Carmelite cloister in Cologne, Germany, only to be transferred to another Carmel in Echt (Holland) because of Germany's racial laws. In August

Edith Stein: Self Portrait in Letters—1916-42, *translated by Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D., Institute of Carmelite Studies, $12.95, 357 pp.*

1942, while working on her posthumously published *Science of the Cross*, she was put in the Westerbork transit camp in Holland along with her sister Rosa and a number of other religious of Jewish origin. In a letter from that camp she tells her superior that they were to be deported east and requests some clothing and the next volume of her breviary. Within a week she was gassed at Auschwitz along with her sister, the other religious, and, as we now know, the Dutch writer Etty Hillesum who mentions in her own correspondence seeing some nuns at Westerbork.

The Institute of Carmelite Studies has been publishing Stein's complete works from the German edition of the *Edith Stein—Werke*. The volume of letters reviewed here is the fifth volume in that series. It is a heartbreaking work to read, especially as one gets into the letters from the 1930s. The letters range from her philosophical correspondence with the Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden in the 1920s to the vast correspondence she carried on with a range of persons after she entered the Carmelite cloister in Cologne. The letters reflect an authentically saintly mind that was capable of enormous human generosity. Along the way one gets glimpses of German intellectual life between the wars. I was struck, for example, that Martin Heidegger refused to take her on as a member of his seminar since she would later be seeking "Catholic" employment. Heidegger refers her to Professor Honecker, the Thomist philosopher. Interestingly enough, Honecker is the same professor who failed (!) Karl Rahner for being too "Kantian" in his reading of Thomas. Rahner had wanted to work with Heidegger (whose seminars he followed) but did not think that the master wanted a Jesuit student under his tutelage. The irony, of course, is that Rahner went back to Innsbruck, banged out a quick thesis in theology, and went on to teach and become one of the best known theologians of the century. *O felix culpa!*

However interesting these intellectual crossings are, what one gets from reading the entire correspondence is a sense of foreboding and awful inevitability. In the early 1930s Edith Stein laconically mentions that she can no longer teach for the sisters because of the racial laws. Soon her letters refer to relatives who emigrate, the "troubles" some of them are having in Europe, the tumult against Jews in the streets, etc. The ominous tone increases as mention is made (while Stein is in Holland) of the registration of non-Aryans; of "police permits" and the denial of exit visas; of her pathetic attempt (a month before she died) to transfer to a Swiss Carmel; and, finally, the op-

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timistic note from Westerbork saying that "we were given a very friendly reception here" and the possibility that they would be freed "or at least that we may remain here." The footnotes to these letters are studded with the laconic phrase "died at Auschwitz."

This is a chastening work to read. Stein (in religion: Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) was a woman of profound faith and deep learning. Her letters exude a love for the liturgy (she had close contacts with the liturgical centers at Maria Laach and Bueron Abbeys), a vast experiential knowledge of mystical prayer (her favorite times of the monastic day were the two hours of silent contemplative meditation), and a wide compassion for others. The Institute of Carmelite Studies should be congratulated for this well annotated and careful edition of her letters which only enhances the other volumes in this series on one of the authentic great souls of our century.

In December 1979, the current pope removed the *missio canonica* of Hans Küng. In practice that meant Küng was declared ineligible to be considered as a professor of *Catholic* theology. In consequence, Küng no longer could be considered a member of the Catholic faculty of theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany (Küng himself is Swiss), or entrusted with the training of future priests and theologians. Küng continues at Tübingen as the head of the Institute for Ecumenical Research. On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday many scholars contributed to a volume assessing his contributions to theology while pleading that the status of Küng as a Catholic theologian be reassessed. That such a reopening of the Küng dossier (#399/57i at the Congregation of the Faith) will happen during the current papacy is more pious wish than a probability given the current atmosphere in Rome.

Hans Küng: New Horizons for Faith and Thought, *edited by Karl-Josef Kuschel and Hermann Haring, Continuum, $27.50, 402 pp.*

What has Küng done in the past decade and a half since his encounter with the CDF? Well, for one thing, he has written books on everything from Freud, literature, Mozart, and the coming new millennium to substantial studies of Christianity's encounter with the great religions of the East, a substantial volume on Judaism, and profound reflections on the need for a global ethic. These works are scrutinized by a panoply of scholars ranging from Masao Abe on Küng's understanding of Buddhism to a Nobel laureate in physics (Nevill Mott) crediting Küng's *On Being a Christian* for his own return to religious faith.

This volume, as befitting one celebrating achievement, is not overly critical of Küng, but it does set out in bold relief the degree to which Küng has asked the tough questions that set much of the past theological agenda for the church and how his restlessly *catholic* mind sees the issues for tomorrow: the relationship of the world's religions in an age of instant communication and terrifying development, and the critical need for restating Christian belief in terms understandable for this age. Currently, Küng is at work on a vast project on Islam which is a compelling area of study for anyone who reads both the newspapers and the signs of the times.

Those interested in the history of contemporary theology will benefit from a close reading of the contributions in this volume which range from an account of how Küng has been "received" in places as diverse as Latin America, the United States, and Russia to a fascinating report on the tensions between theology in Eastern and Western Europe by Peter Hebblethwaite. In between are close studies of Küng's doctrine of God, Christology, and ecclesiology, as well as surveys of his work in the wider *Oikumene*.

And Küng himself? He works as indefatigably as ever but, of necessity, on the edges of the "official" church where he remains in the company of a whole roster of recent "dissenters," both rehabilitated and not: Chenu, Congar, DeLubac, Danielou, Teilhard, Murray, Rahner, Curran, etc. Quite a roster; indeed, in the estimation of many, an honor roll. History will have the last word, however. Newman, in *The Apologia*, wrote something that was as true in 1865 as it is today: "It is individuals and not the Holy See, that have taken the initiative, and given the lead to the Catholic mind, in theological inquiry."

Karl Rahner, a sometime theological critic of Hans Küng, was, despite his forbidding prose style and theological profundity, a deeply committed pastoral theologian who always saw his work as a service to the church. In his fifty-two years as a priest he preached homilies on almost a daily basis and was a gifted retreat master. What Rahner said of Aquinas was surely true of himself: "With him, we do not find the horrible difference which is often to be observed in later theology, between theology and spiritual life."

Karl Rahner: The Great Church Year, *edited by Albert Raffelt and Harvey Egan, S.J., Crossroad, $29.50, 396 pp.*

The Great Church Year provides a series of homilies preached by Rahner and keyed to the Sundays of the liturgical year as well as a selection for the sanctoral cycle. Some of these meditations appear in English for the first time while others are culled from already published volumes. In a helpful appendix, the editors give a list of further writings for the liturgical year not published in this collection. There is also a useful index of Scripture passages commented on by Rahner.

While this volume would be of limited use for cribbing by the harried homilist (who could duplicate Rahner's style?), it should prove to be an estimable *vade mecum* for those who would like to have a handy meditation text. I have kept this volume on my desk, reading the homilies in a nonsystematic fashion (most are just a few pages long) and found them deeply satisfying because of Rahner's capacity to combine deep learning with authentically affective spirituality. I agree perfectly with the German editor of this volume: It allows us to travel through the church year in the company of a powerful theologian. It is an inspiring journey. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

you and need you, and nothing will ever change that. MICHAEL J. KELLY

The writer is a judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

A great service

Twinsburg, Ohio

To the Editors: Father John Dreese's article does a great service to the church, the priesthood, and all other church ministries. It is thoughtful and thought-provoking, and articulates the unspoken thoughts and feelings of others. The article offers a model of how we can search together for healthier ways to structure church polity and policy. An example is the author's calling into question the tendency to judge yesterday's behavior of church officials by today's standards. The apt analogy is the changed attitude toward alcoholism.

Thank you for publishing this wonderful article. CONRAD T. GROMADA

The writer is associate director of the master of arts in ministry program at Ursuline College.

Time to take stock

Murray Hill, N.J.

To the Editors: Father Dreese's article is raw, straightforward, clear. For me it says the whole body of Christ here on earth needs to take stock and decide how to deal effectively with the sexual abuse of children by priests. Speaking from experience as the father of two affected sons, my view is that this is not a job only for the hierarchy and the clergy; it is a responsibility that has been neglected by all of us. It's a realm we don't want to be involved with, or even to discuss. Legal actions will not correct the situation. JOSEPH JACKSON

Still other victims

San Diego, Calif.

To the Editors: With Father John Dreese, I think it is grossly unfair that all priests should be tarred with the stigma of pedophilia. My experience, like his, has been that most priests are dedicated men capable of living celibate lives and of being trusted with children.

When, however, Father Dreese wonders why the pederasts did not leave the priesthood (rather, the clerical state), my answer is that it's not that easy. Ask the tens of thousands of perfectly healthy men, not pederasts,who have asked to be laicized over the past thirty years. Ask me; I tried.

About fifteen years ago, after much anguish and counseling, I decided that I would not save my soul if I remained an active priest. I asked my religious superior whether I should seek a dispensation from the clerical state, and was told not to bother, that Rome was not granting them. I left anyhow.

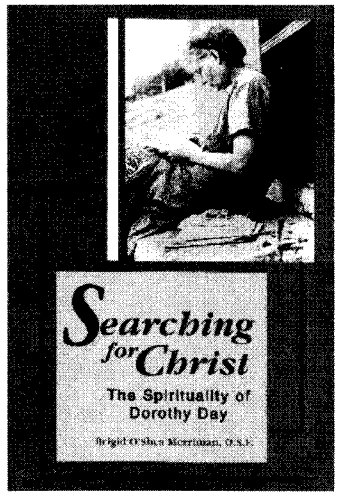
That was the saddest day of my life. A couple of years later, I married, and have been very happily married ever since. For the most part, my friends—clerical and lay—have stood by me. Last year I met my spiritual director from my formation days. Now a retired archbishop, this great man sat me down for three hours and asked me to tell him about myself. After our meeting, he knelt down and asked for my blessing.

For the most part, however, married priests who have sought dialogue with the hierarchy have been chased away. Most bishops don't want to hear from married priests. Requests for reconciliation have been met with silence. There is no forgiveness. To nourish our spiritual lives, we—like the early Christians—meet quietly in each other's homes to celebrate our gifts and our calling. A few U.S. bishops have begun meeting with married priests but, again, it has to be done secretly for fear of the Roman authorities.

I know priests who are highly qualified in academic and pastoral skills doing menial jobs to get by while parishes and other communities of the faithful are going priestless all around them. A priest friend of mine who got married three years ago received a letter from a colleague telling him he was going to hell!

I have met dozens of married priests, and I've known a few pedophiles, but I have never met a priest who asked to be relieved of his vows because of pederasty.

Searching for Christ



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I knew one priest who was expelled from his order after many years of treatment failed.

There's a lesson here somewhere for Father Dreese and the church at large: When priests who do the decent thing are subjected to such shabby treatment, what chance do you have that men who are sick will act in the same responsible way?

DENYS HORGAN

Let Ulster be Ulster

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: Edward Gaffney's article on Northern Ireland ["An Adams Chronicle," April 8] omits reference to a critical factor in the discussions: The majority of the people of the Republic do not want union with Northern Ireland. Ulster and the British deserve each other.

As Seamus Heaney has observed, "It is not enough for people to simply say, 'Ah, they're all Irishmen,' when some Northerners actually spit at the word Irishmen." The response of many in the Republic has been akin to that of the poet W.B. Yeats when he remarked to Lady Gregory about the inhabitants of the North and their politics: "I have always been of the opinion that if such disagreeable neighbors shut the door, it is better to turn the key in it before they change their mind." To that remark I hear a chorus of approval from my County Waterford great-grandparents, who fled that island in 1844 to walk through this great nation's open door.

ROBERT F. LYONS

Belief as a shield?

Stuttgart, Germany

To the Editors: In his March 25 column, "Where Have the Liberals Gone?" David R. Carlin, Jr., appears to argue that it is wrong to brand people as bigots if what they are saying on a given subject is based on religious conviction. Therefore it is wrong to denounce the pope and other Catholic officials for making what many homosexuals would consider to be homophobic statements. Since these churchmen are simply expressing deeply held religious beliefs, the argument runs, liberals should defend not only their right to speak but their "right" not to be called bigots.

Not long ago leaders of the South African Reformed Church were expressing deeply held religious beliefs that were severely hurtful to black people. Within recent memory, Mormon church officials spoke of African-Americans as children of Ham and, as such, unworthy of priesthood. At one point in his career Malcolm X, a profoundly religious man, referred to white people as "blue-eyed devils."

Surely all these religious leaders had the right to express their views. But did no one else have the right to characterize their doctrines as examples of bigotry? If you feel, whether or not out of religious conviction, that you are the victim of homophobic or racist slurs that give evidence of bigotry, what is wrong with saying so? And why should liberals further demean the victims by "defending to the death" those who engage in homophobic or racist speech?

MICHAEL P. CHEW

The author replies:

The obvious answer to Mr. Chew is that not all "religious convictions" are equal. When the pope condemns same-sex marriage, he is reiterating a view held by Christianity from its earliest days, a view carried over from pre-Christian Judaism. By contrast, when Christian churches in a racist society justified racism, they were devising ad hoc rationalizations that conflicted with the ancient Christian idea that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, bond nor free.

There will always be people who try to justify bigotry on the grounds of religion. Does that mean the rest of us have no right to complain when we are falsely accused of bigotry? If so, our ideological foes have won the right to veto the expression of our opinions.

Mr. Chew contends you are entitled to charge someone with bigotry "if you feel....that you are the victim of homophobic" slurs. Before charging anyone with the grave offense of homophobia, you need more that "feeling." You need proof. And it is no proof of homophobia that a person or church disagrees with the

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Johnny-come-lately ideology of the gay movement. DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

O'Gorman's call

Albany, N.Y.

To the Editors: Just yesterday Ned O'Gorman's article ["There's God in the Muck of Life," March 25] was recommended to me by a confrere. Thanks be to God!

I have just completed (endured? suffered through? been led through?) five years as a vocation director. I find O'Gorman's musings about "call" to be tremendously rich. It's a great feeling, isn't it, to resonate with the thoughts and feelings of others?

I sense that O'Gorman's meeting with Dorothy Day during his college years taps into part of what is needed in the lives of many of today's college students. They (and we) need to meet the living God incarnate upon this earth! How else does God invite? May our young people come to know the O'Gormans of our time.

BROTHER JACK CURRAN, FSC

Homosexual holiness

Las Vegas, Nev.

To the Editors: I have subscribed to *Commonweal* for several years and have enjoyed your articles on many subjects, particularly those on the laity that provide thoughtful reflections on the real experiences of Catholics struggling with everyday issues and finding the Spirit in their midst. But your recent symposium on homosexuality [January 28] upset me because none of the articles was written by an openly gay or bisexual person able to appreciate the issues from the inside out; instead we got speculation and frequent handwringing from authors who have not experienced the struggle of what it means to be Catholic and gay.

One author, Luke Timothy Johnson, asks whether there are "narratives of homosexual holiness to which we must begin to listen"—as if gay holiness were different from any other holiness! Both in past history and in the present, there are thousands of examples of holy homosexuals, particularly in response to the AIDS crisis.

If *Commonweal* cannot find and publish such narratives I cannot, in conscience, support *Commonweal*. Accordingly I am donating the price of this year's subscription to the National Catholic AIDS Network. I prayerfully hope that you will reconsider your presentation of issues involving sexuality and spirituality. BRUCE ADAMS

The first human right

Rochester, N.Y.

To the Editors: I would ask you and your readers to recall the "self-evident truths" enunciated in the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence: that we are all created equal and are endowed by our Creator with "certain unalienable rights," among them "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Then write or call your representatives and tell them you do not want any of your tax money to pay for any abortion—and that, since abortion is self-evidently not health care, it ought not be part of any governmental health-care plan, national or otherwise.

MARY RITA CROWE

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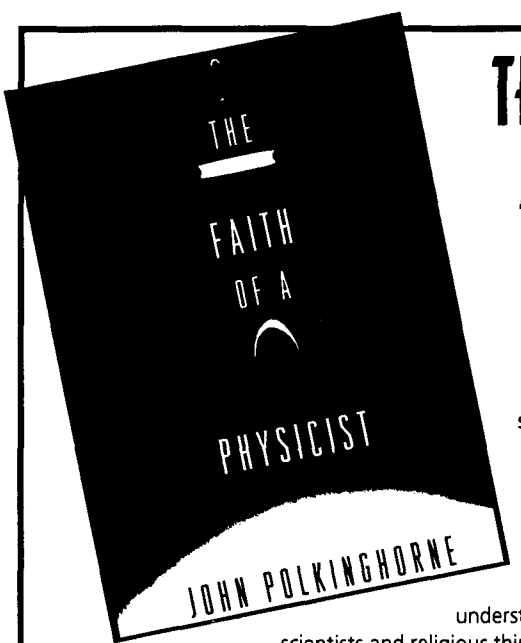

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...and just down the hall

VALERIE SCHULTZ

To reach the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, they tell me at Information, go to the fourth floor, to Maternity, but then turn right.

Of course I've heard of the NICU before, but like any intensive care unit, you only focus on it when your loved ones require extraordinary care. And then it amazes you when you realize that every day, every night of your normal life, *someone* will be there.

On Labor Day, my sister's twin boys decided that nine months of pregnancy were excessive. Without warning, they cut their gestation to less than seven months. Actually, Colin did that; Ian found himself along for the ride that culminated in a danger-fraught whoosh down the birth canal.

The NICU has glass windows, but the blinds are often drawn to spare onlookers the sight of certain procedures. It is a small, brightly lit room, packed with banks of technology, an efficient, serene staff in serviceable shoes, and distressed, angry, tiny humans. Next to the NICU is a waiting room with a nap-length couch, a TV, a water cooler, and an inspiring photo montage of babies who outgrew the need for this place. Unlike the well-baby nursery down the hall, this room is a place of serious, dark, anxious waiting. While the larger nursery in Maternity draws visits from casual well-wishers and even strangers, the NICU serves far more specific watchers. Here, everyone waiting is intimately involved with the patients.

Most of the waiting at NICU is for premature infants, like Colin and Ian. Born well before they were expected to parents who thought they still had plenty of time to pick middle names and take the hospital tour, they survive their first days here. Cheated of their third trimester, they are thrust off schedule and into the dangerous uncertainty of life. For the new parent, daily, customary life has screeched to a dizzying halt. Fathers with thwarted protective instincts and mothers overflowing with new milk must simply wait. What preemies need most from all the medical advances is time: time to grow strong and function unaided on the outside.

Lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Colin through the soundproof glass, between nurses and machines, I see a tiny, hairy creature with a head the size of an orange. His skin miraculously clings to bones without the help of any apparent fat or muscle, and somehow supports tubes and wires from feet, arms, stomach, heart, nose, mouth, lungs. He is naked. A blindfold protects his eyes from the jaundice lights, intensifying the image of newborn as hostage. Every bodily function that I take for granted is monitored. But small and unhappy as Colin is, everything is there: fingernails, eyelashes, nipples, scrotum, nostrils. It's not that anything is missing; it's just that, at twenty-six weeks or so, they are not quite ready. Within hours of birth, Colin can expertly guide his thumb past all entanglements into his mouth and satisfy his primal urge to suck. This to me appears magical, until I realize that he has been sucking his thumb for months, deep within my sister.

This realization takes me by the mental lapels and shakes me. As I gaze through the silence at this child/man, I reflect that while the hospital is now employing every human and medical resource it can muster to save his young life, a mere six weeks earlier it might have legally aborted him. This scares and astounds me.

I am not a rabid anti-abortionist: there was a time in my life when, but for a little luck, I might have been the grateful recipient of one. I have considered myself reluctantly prochoice, prochoice with a weak stomach. I wouldn't have one, but who am I to force other women to bear children? Besides, I'd rather not think about it.

But I am sorely troubled by these faces from the womb in the NICU. Twenty years ago my sister's babies would not have survived their premature birth. Twenty years from now, how much earlier will preemies be medically enabled to survive? Will the twenty-week deadline for abortion become a day or two in the transformation of nonviable plasma into someone's offspring? And will that be enough time for future parents to turn on the suppressed urge to nurture their children?

I fear that we have been kidding ourselves with talk of trimesters and viability. Babies, after all, are babies. It's just that sometimes they are *in utero*. Sometimes they are early. Sometimes they die in spite of our best efforts.

My nephews are going to be fine, thanks to the NICU. They will get chubby and rosy, and grow to be boys of ten and men of twenty. But their tumultuous arrival has forced me to question myself and a society that, depending on some square on a calendar, would just as easily kill them as it would accord them their dignity and human rights.

These vertiginous thoughts refuse to remain on the fourth floor. They accompany me down into the gift shop. They hinder my careful choice of a greeting card. They are not daunted by my gulps of bracing outdoor air. They are emphatically mine.

The boys' crescent-moon slivers of fingernails haunt me long after I am back on the street. Today is the day that I am no longer prochoice. □

Valerie Schultz is a free-lance writer whose work has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Midwifery Today, *and* Mothering.

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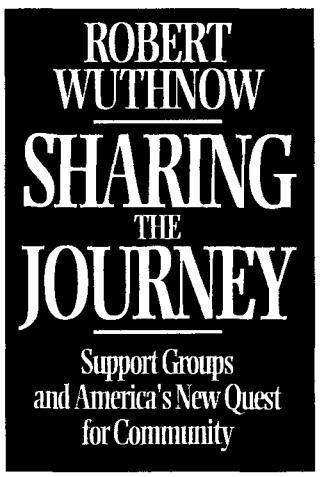

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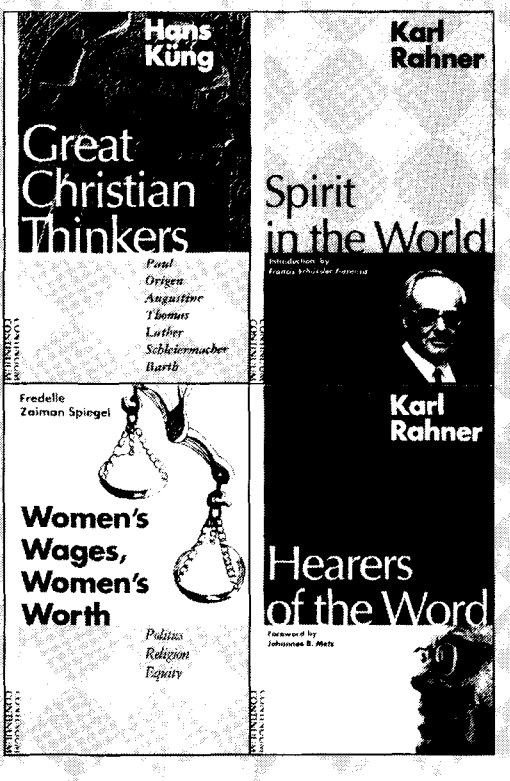

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